



CNN - The CIA's News Network?

Dave McGowan
May 2000

In February of this year, a story that had appeared in the European press was reported by Alexander Cockburn - co-editor of *Counterpunch* - concerning the employment by CNN of military psychological warfare specialists. Other than Cockburn's piece, and the issuance of an 'Action Alert' by the media-watchdog group *FAIR* (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting), the report was ignored by the American press.

As originally reported by Abe de Vries in the Dutch periodical *Trouw*, the story went something like this: "For a short time last year, CNN employed military specialists in 'psychological operations' (psyops). This was confirmed to *Trouw* by a spokesman of the U.S. Army. The military could have influenced CNN's news reports about the crisis in Kosovo."

(1)

Could have? The word 'duh' would seem to apply here. In fact, here's a news flash: the military influenced the news reports of *all* the media outlets that covered the Kosovo bombardment. The *only* news coming from the area was coming from NATO and the Pentagon. When you are the sole source of information, you tend to have a lot of influence.

But that's not the issue here. The concern here is with CNN hiring military personnel to package for viewers the information provided as 'news' by other military personnel. This is said to be a most disturbing development, and I suppose it would be were it not for the fact that the U.S. media - as a whole - is infested with so many intelligence assets that it is hard to see how a few more in the mix could make much of a difference.

Of course, most of them are posing as reporters, editors, news anchors, analysts, producers, publishers, etc. The difference here is that these particular spooks were employed openly at CNN, without journalistic cover. As Major Thomas Collins, of the U.S. Army Information Service acknowledged:

"Psyops personnel, soldiers and officers, have been working in CNN's headquarters in Atlanta through our programme 'Training With Industry'. They worked as regular employees of CNN. Conceivably, they would have worked on stories during the Kosovo war. They helped in the production of news." (1)

The phrase "production of news" is notably ambiguous when used in this context. It could easily be defined as the *manufacture* of news. Manufacturing news is, in fact, exactly what psychological warfare specialists do. As de Vries notes:

"The military CNN personnel belonged to the airmobile Fourth Psychological Operations Group, stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. One of the main tasks of this group of almost 1200 soldiers and officers is to spread 'selected information'. [We should pause here, briefly,

to note that in this context, the phrase 'selected information' generally means vicious distortions and outright lies.]

"American psyops troops try with a variety of techniques to influence media and public opinion in armed conflicts in which American state interests are said to be at stake. [We need to pause again to note that 'American state interests' generally means the financial interests of U.S. monopoly capitalists.] The propaganda group was involved in the Gulf war, the Bosnian war and the crisis in Kosovo." (1)

In other words, they did during the war in Kosovo what they have always done. This time, however, they did it more openly. This could have proven to be a major blunder for CNN, with scores of competitors airing this story to embarrass and discredit a rival. But that would require that we have some actual semblance of a free press.

Instead, what happened was that the story got a couple of brief mentions in the alternative press that were easily overlooked and ignored. And this was only after the translated article began appearing on internet sites, most notably on the [*Emperor's Clothes*](#). Had this not been the case, the story likely would not have surfaced at all on these shores.

Nor would a follow-up article by de Vries in the same publication a few days later. De Vries refers to the Commander of the Fourth Psychological Operations Group, Colonel Christopher St. John, who described the cooperation with CNN as "a textbook example of the kind of ties the American army wants to have with the media." (2)

The kind of ties that will allow it "to spread handpicked 'information' and keep other news quiet, ... to control the internet, to wage electronic warfare against disobedient media, and to control commercial satellites." (2) Most of which, it should be noted, the intelligence community already does to varying degrees. Still, the control is not yet complete enough.

De Vries reports that the psyops personnel were not completely satisfied with the Kosovo operation: "In their opinion, too much information about the unplanned results of the bombings has come to the surface. [We must pause yet again to note that 'unplanned results of the bombings' refers to the entirely foreseeable civilian carnage.] Rear Admiral Thomas Steffens of the U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) reportedly would like to have the capacity to bring down an 'informational cone of silence' over areas where special operations are in place. What that can mean in reality was shown by the bombing of the Serbian state television RTS in Belgrade." (2)

Indeed. And speaking of the bombing of the Serbian television station, there was another story that ran in the European press concerning that particular incident which also happened to cast CNN in a particularly bad light. Considerably more so than the story told in the Dutch publication, in fact.

Significantly, this story was not aired at all in the United States. It did appear, however, in the U.K., in an article by correspondent Robert Fisk in *The Independent*. The report reveals that:

"Two days before NATO bombed the Serb Television headquarters in Belgrade, CNN received a tip from its Atlanta headquarters that the building was to be destroyed. They were told to remove their facilities from the premises at once, which they did." (3)

Apparently it helps to have those psyops specialists on board. Fisk goes on to recount that the next day, Aleksander Vucic, the Serbian Information Minister, received an invitation to appear on the *Larry King Live* show, ostensibly to give Larry's audience the Serbian view of the conflict via satellite.

There were two rather serious problems with this invitation, however. First, the notion that CNN would invite a Serbian official on the air to give the Serb point of view is rather far-fetched, to say the least. More importantly, the studio to which Vucic had been invited was now deserted. Nevertheless, he was asked to arrive for makeup at 2:00AM for a 2:30AM appearance.

"Vucic was late - which was just as well for him since NATO missiles slammed into the

building at six minutes past two. The first one exploded in the make-up room where the young Serb assistant was burned to death. CNN calls this all a coincidence, saying that the Larry King show, put out by the entertainment division, did not know of the news department's instruction to its men to leave the Belgrade building." (3)

CNN's explanation is, of course, preposterous. In fact, the notion that there is some kind of distinction between CNN's 'entertainment division' and its 'news department' is rather preposterous as well. The truth appears to be that CNN was directly complicit in the attempted commission of a war crime.

And this action was, to be sure, a war crime. The deliberate targeting of a foreign dignitary for assassination - even in time of war - is definitely an international war crime. So it appears that our media have crossed the line from complicity in the covering-up of U.S. war crimes - which has been a mainstay of the press for decades - to complicity in the actual commission of war crimes.

A rather serious transgression, one would think, yet one which has been politely overlooked by the rest of the American media outlets. This is quite likely due to the fact that the intelligence community and corporate America pretty much controls all the media.

That is why even when stories such as the CNN/Psyops reports emerge in the 'progressive' media, albeit in a very limited way, they are accompanied by amusing commentary and analysis intended to downplay the significance of the incident.

For example, Cockburn wonders if: "It could be that CNN was the target of a psyops penetration and is still too naïve to figure out what was going on." (4) To the contrary, it appears that CNN was well aware of - and actively participating in - "what was going on."

Similarly, for *FAIR* what is "especially troubling is the fact that the network allowed the Army's covert propagandists to work in its headquarters, where they learned the ins and outs of CNN's operations. Even if the psyops officers working in the newsroom did not influence news reporting, did the network allow the military to conduct an intelligence-gathering mission against CNN itself?" (5)

Or, more likely, is CNN itself an "intelligence gathering mission," and has it been from its inception? It was CNN, it will be recalled, that pioneered the concept of military conflict as mini-series - complete with theme music and title graphics - during the Gulf War. That is, of course, the blueprint that has been followed by the media at large for all coverage of U.S. military actions since then.

One of the specific purposes for which CNN seems to have been born is the packaging of imperialist military conquests as humanitarian missions. In other words, "to spread 'selected information'" in order to "influence media and public opinion in armed conflicts in which American state interests are said to be at stake."

Glorification of U.S. high-tech weaponry, vilification of America's enemy of the moment, canonization of genocidal military leaders and advisers, rote reporting of the NATO/Pentagon/State Department line, deliberate avoidance of reporting clear-cut cases of American brutality and war crimes - all of these are indicative of a psyops program, not an allegedly independent news agency.

As the group *FAIR* noted: "CNN has always maintained a close relationship with the Pentagon. Getting access to top military officials is a necessity for a network that stakes its reputation on being first on the ground during wars and other military operations." (5)

Being first on the ground during military operations is, to be sure, a good place to be if one is a reporter. It is also a good place to be, it should be noted, if one is a member of the spook community.

Whether CNN was born as an intelligence front is probably now largely an irrelevant issue, as the cable titan has since the Kosovo war announced that it is to become a part of the AOL family. And AOL is, as was noted in a recent *Spin Cycle* article (Sony's Magic [Cameras](#)), doing a pretty damn good job of masquerading as an intelligence front itself.

So if CNN was not originally conceived as a psychological warfare entity (which appears to be the case, despite its purported status as the brainchild of Ted Turner, husband of Jane Fonda), it has certainly evolved into one. And by the way, does anyone remember when Jane was supposed to be one of the good guys? Just checking.

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Sony's Magic Cameras

Dave McGowan
June 2000

The American media had a good laugh over a story that was briefly bandied about a couple of years ago. It seems that a certain manufacturer of consumer electronics had inadvertently released a batch of 'defective' video cameras to the public. These cameras had a most unusual feature: when used in a particular manner, they allowed the user to covertly film unsuspecting people *sans* clothing.

The press chuckled over this for a few days, particularly when noting that a recall effort by the company had not resulted in the return of very many of the faulty cameras. This is likely because the cameras were not actually defective, at least not in the normal sense of the word. In fact, they performed the normal home video camera functions quite well.

The problem was that they had an *extra* function. The company explained that this was due to a manufacturing defect - a bad batch of chips - and the story was quickly lost in the shuffle and forgotten. But beneath this seemingly inconsequential story of a company mishap lurked something far more sinister - a brief glimpse into Big Brother's toolbox.

It can be safely concluded that these cameras were not by any stretch of the imagination 'defective.' They actually performed exactly as designed. The problem most likely was that a batch of cameras built for military and/or intelligence purposes found their way onto the consumer market. This obviously presented a bit of a problem for the company. They could not even admit that such technology exists, let alone that they were in the business of developing and manufacturing such devices. The solution? Blame it on a manufacturing defect.

True to form, the media appeared not to notice the patently absurd nature of this pathetic attempt at a cover story. The truth is that the intelligence community has spent decades researching and enormous amounts of cash developing and refining this very type of surveillance technology, and these cameras were one of the end results of that research.

The technology that gives these devices the ability to see through clothes is, needless to say, considerably more advanced than that which is found in your everyday home video camera. You just don't get from one to the other through a manufacturing 'flaw,' just as color television wasn't miraculously born when someone botched a batch of black-and-white picture tubes.

In truth, virtually all consumer electronics - as well as non-consumer technology utilized by business and industry - begins life in the intelligence community, and only after it has outlived its usefulness there does it emerge in the public sphere, often as the newest consumer craze.

The Polaroid camera is a classic example of this. Edwin Land, as has been reported, was

a long time member of the intelligence community, where his area of expertise was electronic surveillance. Among other things, he played a key role on the U-2 spy plane project and presided over the Scientific Engineering Institute, a CIA front. (1) He is of course better known as the inventor of the famed camera.

The Polaroid was actually invented long before its debut on store shelves. It should be readily apparent to readers that this breakthrough technology - at a time when no one knew of its existence - would have been of enormous value to the spy-trade, which is precisely why the spooks utilized it for an untold number of years before it was 'reinvented' as a consumer product.

And so it goes with other high-tech innovations as well, including the nifty new through-the-clothes video cameras. This particular form of invasive technology has already begun to creep into the public sphere. Not long after the camera story aired, a local newscast carried a story about a new type of security system being trialed at a U.S. airport. In place of the standard metal detector that we have all come to know and love was what could best be described as an electronic strip-search machine.

This device utilized what appeared to be the very same technology that made its debut in the 'defective' cameras. As travelers and guests passed through the scanner, the operator was viewing what was described as a very accurate representation of their nude forms. As would be expected, this innovation did not seem to be well received and the limited media coverage was promptly dropped.

The surveillance of America, however, continues. Along with the through-the-clothes technology, we now also have through-the-wall surveillance capabilities. (2) And along with the ability to see through walls comes the ability to *hear* through walls as well. A device known as a laser-guided microphone can be pointed at any pane of glass, allowing the user to eavesdrop upon any conversation emanating from within a windowed structure.

Though a creation of high technology, this device is actually based on a rather low-tech concept: a pane of glass acts as a speaker, of sorts, vibrating in response to the sound waves striking it from inside your home. Any flat, non-rigid, membrane-like surface in a building acts in much the same way.

The drywall that covers the walls of your home, for instance, conducts sound as well. That is how sound travels through a wall. The sound waves strike the drywall on one side of the wall, which acts much like a microphone. Through the studs in the wall (the conduit or speaker wire, so to speak) the sound is transferred to the drywall on the other side, which through vibration then serves as the speaker.

But enough with the physics lessons. The point is that any pane of glass in a building is a potential speaker. And with the use of advanced military technology, it is possible to isolate and amplify the otherwise inaudible sound waves being broadcast from that window pane.

This technology is rapidly being shared with ostensibly civilian law enforcement agencies, so that local law enforcement will soon be able to conduct what amounts to a drive-by search of your home - looking and listening in - without your consent or even your awareness, at any time they should so choose.

Equally alarming is the proliferation of allegedly private firms, dubbed 'data warehouses,' whose sole function is the collection and cataloguing of data about American citizens. The *Washington Post* recently described how the warehouses function: "Twenty-four hours a day, Acxiom electronically gathers and sorts information about 196 million Americans. Credit card transactions and magazine subscriptions. Telephone numbers and real estate records. Car registrations and fishing licenses. Consumer surveys and demographic details." (3)

Also readily available and fair game are medical records, financial and banking information, military records, marital records, and an array of other personal information. All of this information gathering is greatly facilitated by the technological advances that have

been sold to the public as products and services that greatly benefit us as consumers.

For example, the move towards a 'cashless' society has allowed an unprecedented amount of personal data to enter the information marketplace. While it is undoubtedly a convenience to purchase virtually any good or service with an ATM or credit card, it is also quite true that doing so leaves an electronic trail that can and will be followed.

It is not just the types of products you are buying that is tracked, but *where* you are buying them as well. Your daily routines will, over time, show up in the ways in which you use electronic money. By databasing each transaction, your daily travels can be accurately constructed, as well as your shopping habits and various other aspects of your life.

Another great boom to the information gatherers has been the widespread popularity of the internet. I hate to be the one to break the news, but the innovation that allows you to gather information also allows others to gather information *about* you. The internet was, long before Al Gore or anyone else 'invented' it, a military intelligence entity. It was designed, implemented and maintained by the intelligence community to fulfill its needs, not yours. And it continues to be an apparatus of the intelligence infrastructure today.

As the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* tells it: "The Internet had its origin in a U.S. Department of Defense program called ARPANET (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network), established in 1969 to provide a secure and survivable communications network for organizations engaged in defense-related research ... at length the National Science Foundation (NSF), which had created a similar and parallel network called NSFNet, took over much of the TCP/IP technology from ARPANET and established a distributed network of networks capable of handling far greater traffic." (4)

The encyclopedia also notes that, contrary to the current notion that no one controls the internet, "NSF continues to maintain the backbone of the network." The same encyclopedia describes the NSF as "an independent agency of the U.S. government," though what exactly an 'independent' agency of the U.S. government is receives no explanation. Other reports have noted though that the NSF has been heavily involved in funding and conducting MK-ULTRA research. (5)

Britannica explains that the foundation was "inspired by advances in science and technology that occurred as a result of World War II; the NSF was established by the U.S. Congress in the National Science Foundation Act of 1950." What the NSF is, in other words, is one of a blizzard of intelligence fronts that were set up in the immediate aftermath of the forming of the CIA itself in 1947.

Of course, just because the beloved internet was begun as an intelligence entity and is still administered by a government agency doesn't mean that it still functions as an intelligence tool. It is worth noting, however, that the company that was primarily responsible for repackaging the internet into a civilian entity, America Online, is perhaps the most thinly veiled intelligence front ever conceived.

This can be easily verified by a visit to AOL's corporate website, where visitors learn - among other things - that the company is headquartered in [Dulles](#), Virginia. Curious as to where this might be, I attempted to locate the city of Dulles on a couple of maps, to no avail. This, I learned, was because Dulles is actually an offshoot of Langley, Virginia.

Langley is also rather difficult to locate on a map. For the uninitiated, this is because Langley, Virginia is the home of the Central Intelligence Agency. In fact, there isn't much else in Langley, Virginia, which exists almost exclusively to provide residence to the thousands of employees of the CIA's headquarters.

And it is precisely there that you will find the home of AOL. Apparently recognizing the negative connotations of a Langley mailing address, the company essentially created a 'suburb' and named it Dulles. Dulles, by the way, is named in honor of the notorious Dulles siblings, Allen and John Foster, whose names were virtually synonymous with the U.S. intelligence infrastructure through both World Wars and much of the Cold War.

Another fact about AOL that belies its true function is the composition of its [Board of Directors](#). Here you will find such high-level military/intelligence assets as General Colin Powell and General Alexander Haig. All of which gives a whole new meaning to that all-seeing eye that comprises the company's logo.

The ways in which we are encouraged to use the internet also belie an intelligence function. Perhaps the most popular use is for communicating via e-mail, which is rapidly replacing other modes of communication. Not coincidentally, e-mail communications are far easier to intercept than are correspondence by phone or letter, especially given that they are traveling on a network designed by spooks.

Also increasingly popular is on-line shopping, which greatly facilitates the gathering of information about your shopping and spending habits. Yet more disturbing is the push for on-line banking, which is a great idea if you don't mind your banking transactions being added to your information profile. Not that your banker isn't already sharing that information anyway.

(6) The filing of taxes online is being heavily promoted as well. Anyone who now figures their taxes with a program such as *Turbotax* knows that there will be a steady stream of prompts to file your tax return electronically. Probably the same result could be obtained by sending your return directly to Langley. Of course, belief in the notion that the IRS doesn't share your tax information with any other government agencies has always required a rather large leap of faith.

Perhaps the most alarming use for which the internet is now being promoted is for on-line voting. Though this may sound like an enormous benefit, particularly for those who - due to age or physical infirmity - find it difficult to get to a polling booth, it also means that the notion of secret ballot elections could soon become a distant memory.

There are other ways, as well, in which products hailed as a great boon to consumers are steadily eroding our privacy. These products invariably become ubiquitous virtually overnight, through heavy promotion and advertising coupled with rapidly falling prices. The most obvious example of this is cellular phones.

Cell phones have, of course, tremendously benefited consumers - particularly those arrogant buffoons who feel the need to trumpet their self-importance by making obnoxious calls on elevators. Yet cell phones have a dark side as well: they function as tracking devices, allowing your movements to be precisely monitored. This capacity is an integral feature of the phone: the communications satellite must know where you are in order for you to send and receive your calls.

As was reported in *Rolling Stone*, "In Japan, cell phones are used to track the precise whereabouts of their users (the software lets you punch in someone's phone number and gives back his location, even the floor he's on). A locational capacity is coming soon to American cell phones by order of the Federal Communications Commission." (7)

Similarly, computerized navigational systems featured in new cars serve the same purpose. And again, this is an integral feature of the technology: the precise location of your vehicle *must* be known for the system to work. One report noted that: "Receivers for Global Positioning System satellites will become a feature in every new car's navigational system, perhaps allowing a system 'hacker' to track your whereabouts to a centimeter's accuracy." (8)

It's not likely though that system hackers are what you need be concerned about. The spooks who launched and maintain the GPS satellites through intelligence fronts like ITT should be of some concern, however. As should the law enforcement agencies with whom this information will undoubtedly be shared.

Even without the on-board navigational system, it will soon be possible to track *any* vehicle. One report has noted that "Vehicle Recognition Systems have been developed which can identify a car number plate then track the car around a city using a computerized geographic information system. Such systems are now commercially available." (9)

As are facial recognition systems - powered by software "trained to measure spatial relationships among facial features and to convert that information into a mathematical map of the face." (10) "The revolution in urban surveillance will reach the next generation of control once reliable face recognition comes in. In fact, an American company Software and Systems has trialed a system in London which can scan crowds and match faces against a database of images held in a remote computer." (9)

The database is already being built, by the way. The *Washington Post* has reported that "A small New Hampshire company that wants to build a national database of driver's license photographs received nearly \$1.5 million in federal funds and technical assistance from the U.S. Secret Service last year." (11)

The day is not far off when all of this technology will be combined to erode the last vestiges of privacy rights. As Marc Rottenberg - head of the Electronic Privacy Information Center - has noted: "People don't quite get it yet ... soon there will be computer files of facial images, and when you walk in (a building), your face will be instantly scanned by computer, so you'll be recognized by name." (7)

Picture the day when every store you enter will capture your photo (as is already the case), access a photo database via a high-speed internet connection and identify you by name, Social Security number, etc.. This identification will then be fed into another database from an information warehouse, revealing all the details of your life. Instantly.

Your shopping habits will be examined: do you normally shop in this type of store? If not, then what are you doing there? Your financial status will be examined: can you even afford to shop in this particular store? Your police record will be examined: remember that little shoplifting indiscretion in your youth?

And of course - just to be on the safe side - you might be digitally strip-searched upon entering and leaving the store as well. If you arouse too much suspicion, you might even be tracked after leaving the facility: "All these devices can be linked together and allow police to spy in real time." (6) Then again, you could opt to just stay at home and do all your shopping via the internet. If so, remember to wave to the nice policeman conducting the drive-by search of your home.

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*The center for an
informed America*

The Convict and the Guard: A Tale of Two Trials

Dave McGowan

March 2000

(The following article first appeared on the [World Socialist Web Site](#))

A very interesting pair of stories appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* on March 23. The articles, both very brief *Associated Press* releases, did not appear on the same page and no indication was given that there was any connection between the two. Taken together, however, these two clippings paint a revealing portrait of the American civil and criminal justice system.

The first of the two, appearing on page A29, concerns a civil rights lawsuit brought by an inmate at California's Corcoran State Prison against five of the prison's guards. The inmate, Ronnie Dewberry, had been representing himself in the case, which was dismissed by Judge M.D. Crocker on March 21. To understand the nature of Mr. Dewberry's suit, it is necessary to review the recent history of Corcoran Prison.

Corcoran is probably the most brutal of all of California's prisons, a state that leads the nation in the rush to incarcerate ever greater numbers of people in increasingly harsh conditions. Nowhere in the world is the prison population rising faster than in California. In December of 1998, the *Atlantic Monthly* reported that in just 20 years the inmate population in the state had grown from 19,600 to 159,000 - an eight-fold increase - and that the "state holds more inmates in its jails and prisons than do France, Great Britain, Germany, Japan, Singapore, and the Netherlands combined."

These numbers are expected to increase rapidly in the next few years. The *Los Angeles Times* reported on August 16, 1999 that California is in the midst of the nation's largest prison building program. This \$5 billion plan is scheduled to give the state an additional 64,000 prison beds. The key role that the prison system increasingly plays in US social policy, particularly in the state of California, can be judged from a report by the Justice Policy Institute - from October 1996 - which stated: "From 1984 to 1994, California built 21 prisons, and only one state university ... the prison system realized a 209% increase in funding, compared to a 15% increase in state university funding."

And yet even within the vastness of California's penal system, Corcoran State Prison managed to stand out. It first attained notoriety a few years ago when allegations began surfacing that guards at the prison had forced prisoners to stage 'gladiator' fights in the prison yard, and that these same guards had regularly shot those prisoners who did not perform adequately. Amnesty International has reported that at least seven prisoners were shot dead at these fights. *Esquire* magazine added, in September of 1999, that "forty three more Corcoran prisoners were shot and seriously wounded, some paralyzed."

Other reports on Corcoran tell of the prison's so-called 'Booty Bandit,' a very large and

sadistically violent inmate. There have been repeated allegations of guards 'disciplining' other inmates by locking them up for a few nights with the 'Booty Bandit,' with the full knowledge and expectation that the inmate would be repeatedly raped and beaten. Other witnesses have charged that new arrivals at the prison were routinely forced to run a gauntlet of prison guards, who savagely beat, kicked and clubbed the new inmates as an initiation into the prison.

All of this was rather candidly acknowledged in the *Esquire* piece by former Corcoran guard Roscoe Pondexter, the most feared and respected of the prison's guards, nicknamed 'Bonecrusher.' Interviewed for the article, Pondexter candidly admits that all such activities were indeed standard procedure at the prison, and that he was an active participant. The article also notes that "after each killing, an internal review board would determine that the use of force was necessary, that the shooting had been a 'good shoot,' and then things would carry on as usual."

Also included was a rather chilling quote from Pondexter concerning the attitude among the guards and the atmosphere of brutality at the prison: "It didn't matter to us. Who we killed, who was killed. It didn't matter and everybody got cleared." Pondexter was at the time of this article scheduled to appear to offer this testimony in a series of suits brought by Corcoran inmates. Suits very much like that of Ronnie Dewberry, who had alleged that he was wounded when shots were fired after he was placed in the prison yard with his known enemies and a fight ensued.

The *AP* release notes: "The inmate argued his case before a civil jury, but was frustrated in his continued attempts to question correctional officers about how many times weapons were used to break up fights, if rival gang factions were placed together and how many times black inmates were shot at." Though not explicitly stated, the implication is clearly that the judge and/or the state's attorney repeatedly blocked Dewberry's attempts to introduce relevant evidence revealing the barbaric nature of the prison and its guards.

Following Dewberry's attempted presentation of evidence, the state's attorney moved that the charges be dismissed, and the judge concurred, stating: "I just don't think the facts added up to a violation of your civil rights." Interestingly enough, on page A30 of the same edition of the *Times*, another story appeared concerning the conviction of Francisco Gavaldon on charges that he had arranged to have his estranged wife killed. He was also convicted on a conspiracy charge, stemming from a plan of Gavaldon's to "get his son - 14 years old at the time - to hit his wife's daughter - 10 at the time - in the mouth and blame Donna Gavaldon for the injury." The plan was formulated "in an effort to improve his chances for child custody."

And how is this related to Mr. Dewberry's case? By the fact that Francisco Gavaldon is, as is duly noted, "a former Corcoran State Prison guard." Such is the caliber of men chosen to guard California's most notorious prison. But no matter. As Dewberry's case - as well as those of numerous others - amply illustrates, in the nation's courtrooms - as in Corcoran Prison - it doesn't matter and everybody gets cleared.

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Postscript: On June 10, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that: "Eight Corcoran prison guards accused of setting up inmate gladiator fights were acquitted Friday of federal civil rights abuses, a resounding verdict that all but ends one of the most troubled chapters in California prison history." (1)

The eight guards faced a total of over 30 counts in what was "one of the largest

prosecutions ever of state prison guards." (1) The jury took just six hours to clear the men of all charges, based on an anemic prosecution that was obviously intended to throw the case.

Of course, they got some help from the judge in that regard as well. Beginning with jury selection, "Judge Ishii allowed several people to sit on the jury even though they had reason to lean toward the guards' side." (1) One of these was a corrections officer herself, and another had an application pending to become one.

The judge's pretrial ruling that barred any testimony about a 'code of silence' among prison guards didn't help the prosecution's case much either. Such testimony would "have helped the jury understand why at least one former guard called as a government witness backed away from her grand jury testimony. The witness then went out of her way to praise the accused officers in open court." (1)

This was one of only nine prosecution witnesses called, although there were 60 names on the state's witness list. And "in the end, the government called only one of the whistle-blowers during the trial for limited questioning." (1) This was Richard Caruso, one of the guards who initially brought the practices of the prison to the attention of both the FBI and the *Los Angeles Times*.

And how was this star witness handled by the prosecutors? For starters, Caruso complained that he was not adequately prepared by the state's attorneys. And once on the stand, he was handled in a way that seems rather obviously intended to damage his credibility as much as possible.

"One by one, defense attorneys began to question Caruso's motives as a whistle-blower, pointing out that he had signed a recent movie deal potentially worth more than \$500,000. Caruso testified that he didn't care if a movie was made, didn't care if he received the \$500,000.

"Defense attorneys shouted 'liar,' and prosecutors sat in silence as Caruso was left shaking his head in the witness box. When it came time for prosecutors to repair the damage, they never elicited testimony from Caruso that the reason he didn't need the money was that the state recently paid him \$1.7 million to settle his lawsuit alleging retaliation for taking his allegations public.

"It was the largest amount ever given to a whistle-blowing officer in California and the jury never heard about it.

"...Another damaging moment for Caruso was when an FBI agent contradicted his testimony about a high-speed chase. Caruso had testified that the day he turned over documents to the FBI, he and an agent were pursued by state prison investigators. Agent Jennifer Murphy testified that the chase never happened. Caruso said he has a tape-recording in which he and Murphy discussed the chase." (2)

This type of prosecutorial behavior is hard to explain away as mere incompetence. Failure to introduce evidence of this nature is unfathomable. How could the prosecution have allowed their key witness to be destroyed when unimpeachable evidence existed to contradict those who were inflicting the damage?

As Caruso himself told reporters, "The prosecutors did nothing to enhance my credibility to the jury, and they had plenty to work with. I was on the honor guard at Corcoran and my record was outstanding. Instead, they let me twist in the wind while the defense attorneys called me a liar and a cheat." (2)

And how did the prosecutors account for this shabby handling of its main witness? One of them said: "By the time we got around to talking to Caruso, it was too late to pursue some of that stuff. Maybe I would have changed a few things, but we did the best we could." (2)

By the time they got to the key witness it was too late to pursue the main elements of the case? And too late as well to bring in any other whistle-blowers, or any of the other fifty witnesses on the prospective witness list? Even after prosecutors could see that the nine witnesses they had allowed to testify could not garner convictions?

I think it fairly safe to conclude that the prosecutors did not, in fact, do the best they could. And neither did the prosecutors in "another highly publicized trial of Corcoran prison guards. In November (of 1999), four Corcoran guards were acquitted of setting up the rape of an inmate by a notoriously violent prisoner known as the 'Booty Bandit.'" (3)

Despite this pattern of court decisions, the brutality at Corcoran prison has been documented. "State legislative hearings in 1998 confirmed a pattern of brutality at Corcoran, and an independent panel found that nearly 80% of the shootings were unjustified and never fully investigated by the state." (1)

But once again, Roscoe Pondexter's words have proven prophetic: "It didn't matter and everybody got cleared."

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The Terrorists are Coming! The Terrorists are Coming!

***David McGowan
August 2000***

*Note to readers: A few recent visitors to this web site have e-mailed me asking if perhaps this article (previously posted elsewhere on this site) shouldn't be taken down or rewritten in light of the events of September 11, 2001. Having forgotten what the article actually said, I decided to review it for myself. After doing so, I decided that it shouldn't be taken down or rewritten, and is in fact more relevant today than the day it was written. Notice that all of the reactionary 'security' measures now being openly called for by all avenues of the U.S. political and media apparatus were already being quietly called for long before any 'terrorist' attack took place. Of course, a year ago these measures would have met with stiff resistance from the American people. That is decidedly not the case now. It is left to the reader to decide if this represents the prescient wisdom of our fearless leaders, or a self-fulfilling prophecy.
September 19, 2001*

The National Commission on Terrorism, a ten-member panel assembled by the U.S. Congress to deal with supposedly rising levels of international terrorism, released a sixty-four page report this June in which a variety of measures designed to hasten the rise of the overt police state were recommended. According to the panel, these recommendations were based on a conclusion reached after conducting a six-month world-wide investigation.

This investigation led the bipartisan commission to the rather remarkable conclusion that "a well-financed, fanatical and global terrorist network poses exceedingly difficult problems for U.S. law enforcement and intelligence agencies." Commission chairman L. Paul Bremer III, a former State Department ambassador-at-large for counterterrorism (which is to say, a spook) summed up the problem thusly: "the threat is changing, and it's becoming more deadly." (1)

An adviser to the commission - who also boasts of being a senior adviser to the president of the Rand Corporation, a long-time intelligence front - described the report as "a passionate document determined to bring about a fundamental change in mind-set." He praised the commission for recognizing that "while progress has been made in combating terrorism, the terrorist threat has evolved ... Large scale indiscriminate violence has become the reality of today's terrorism, raising concerns that tomorrow's terrorists will move beyond truck bombs to employ chemical, biological or even nuclear weapons." (2)

Fanatical bands of global terrorists toting nuclear weapons and launching them

indiscriminately? That's pretty scary stuff. The thing that really sucks is that it comes at a time when we thought we had finally made the world safe by eliminating the menace of "international communism." And now this.

It's really a bitch being the world's only superpower. Never a moment's rest. Of course, being that we are - as Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has stated - "the indispensable nation," we will do the right thing and make sacrifices at home and abroad to deal with this new global threat. Luckily, the commission has given us a blueprint for what we need to do.

First, the good news: the aforementioned commission chairman was quick to clarify that the report is "not recommending martial law." (3) Whew! That sure is a relief (of course, it would be even more of a relief if the good chairman had not even felt the need to bring up the subject of martial law). There are a few changes we're going to have to make though.

For starters, we need "more wiretaps on Americans." That will show those fanatical bastards that we are getting serious about fighting a war on terrorism. We also need to start "using the Army to replace civilian law enforcement" (though how you tell the difference anymore between 'civilian' law enforcement and military personnel is beyond me). And even more importantly, we need to start "stigmatizing foreign students who switch their majors to science," (4) lest they scurry back to the terrorist-harboring rogue state that they call home and start building nuclear warheads.

It's also high time that we begin "loosening restrictions on the Central Intelligence Agency." (1) Enough with the incredible restraint the agency has shown for the last fifty-three years - let's put some real teeth into the CIA. For one thing, let's "drop the guidelines that restrict the recruitment of unsavory informants who have committed human right abuses." (2)

This is, of course, an age-old problem for the agency. In the past, guidelines have been so restrictive that mass murderers like Klaus Barbie were barely able to slip in the door. Rumor has it that Salvadoran death squad leader Roberto D'Aubuisson had to lie on his application to get on the payroll. It's really rather foolish to think that an intelligence agency can function effectively without a few Nazis, Mafioso, drug lords and assassins on the roster. We're trying to fight a war here.

And let's follow another of the commission's recommendations and begin "threatening sanctions against states normally regarded as friendly to U.S. interests, such as Greece and Pakistan." (1) Why? Because they are "not cooperating fully" in the U.S.-sponsored war on terrorism. And if they don't clean up their act, they may just find themselves listed as "a 'state sponsor' of terrorism, a label now officially attached by the State Department to just seven countries: Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Sudan, North Korea and Cuba." (1)

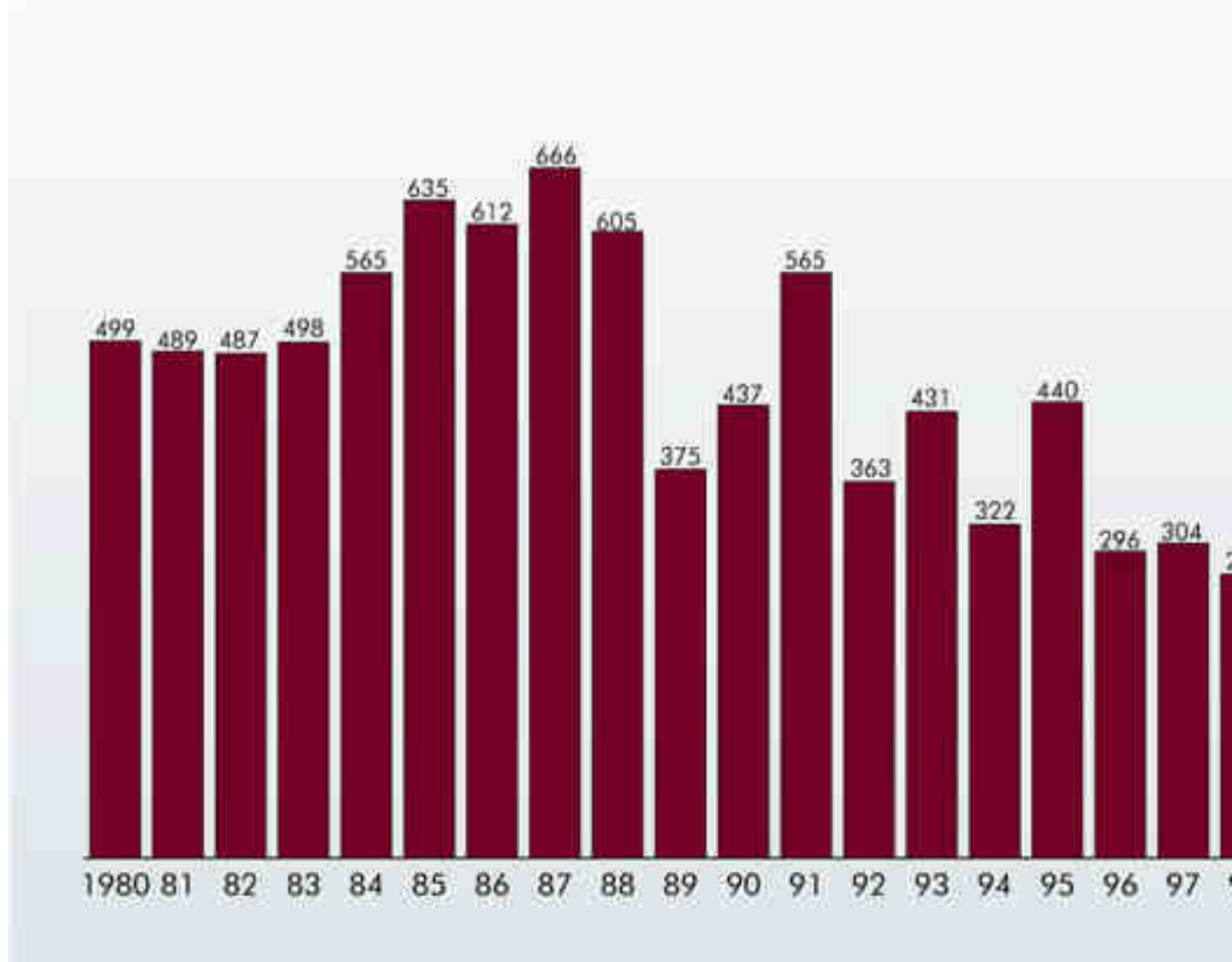
In fact, maybe we should just start issuing threats to any nation at random. You never know where those crafty terrorists could be hiding. As Brian Michael Jenkins - the adviser to the commission - noted: "the new murkier structures are harder to identify, more difficult to penetrate." (2) Almost, in fact, as if they don't even exist at all.

Finally, let's definitely implement the commission's recommendation that "in the case of a catastrophic terrorist attack ... the Department of Defense be designated the lead federal agency, instead of the FBI or the Federal Emergency Management Agency." (2) I can't speak for anyone else, but it certainly makes *me* feel safer knowing that the agency in charge will be one that admits to being a military entity, rather than one that pretends not to be.

Perhaps it is time to pause here for a reality check - the cold, hard reality being that *there is no international terrorist threat* to the United States. It simply does not exist. But you don't have to take my word for it - the U.S. State Department itself has graphically illustrated this fact in their annual report entitled "Patterns of Global Terrorism: 1999." A few of the charts included in this report will suffice to show that the State Department is well aware of the fact that there is no terrorist threat to the United States, even as this same government agency attempts to exploit the wholly manufactured fear of this non-existent threat to further curtail the few civil liberties still remaining in this country.

Appendix C Statistical Review

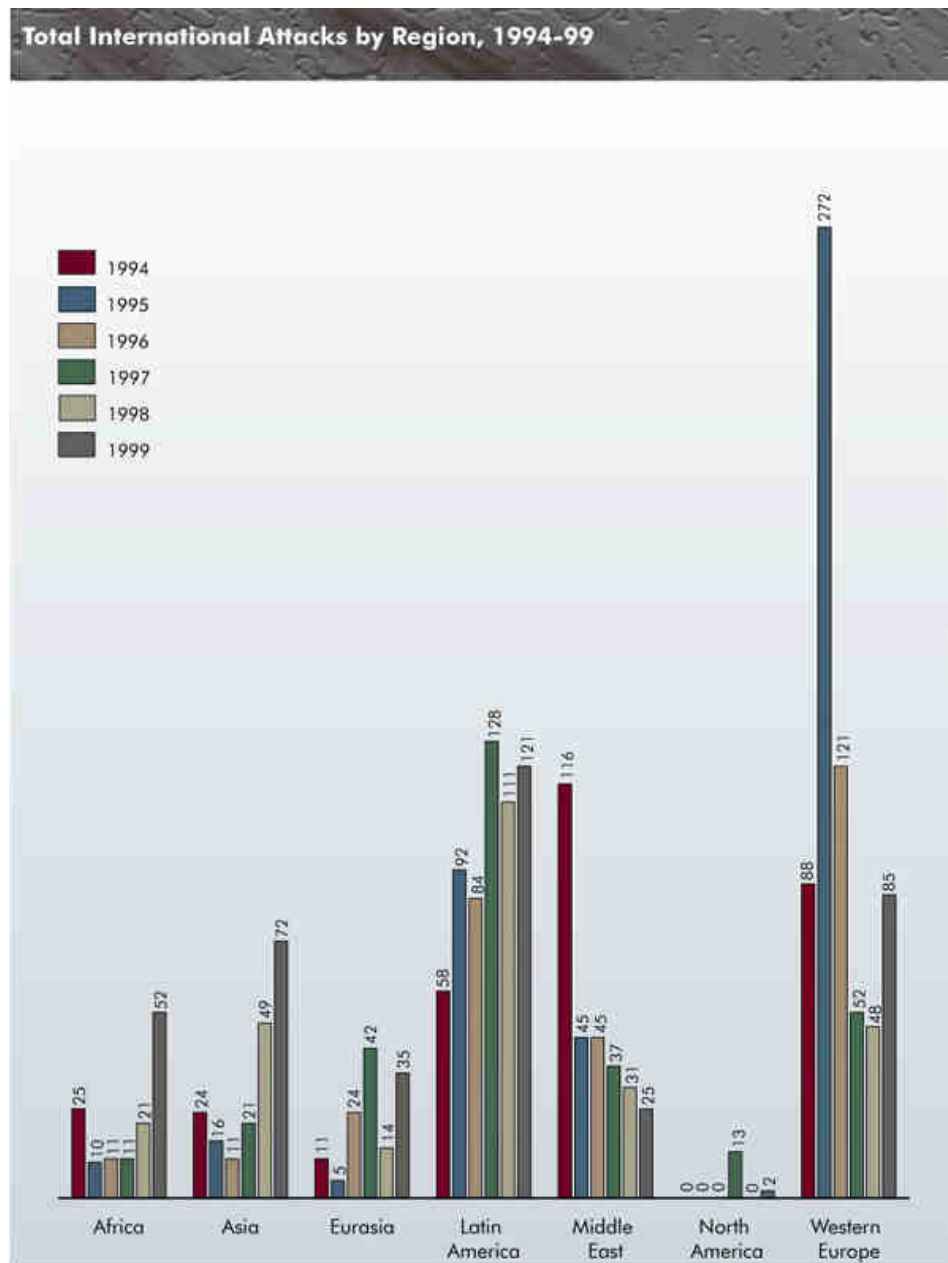
Total International Terrorist Attacks, 1980-99

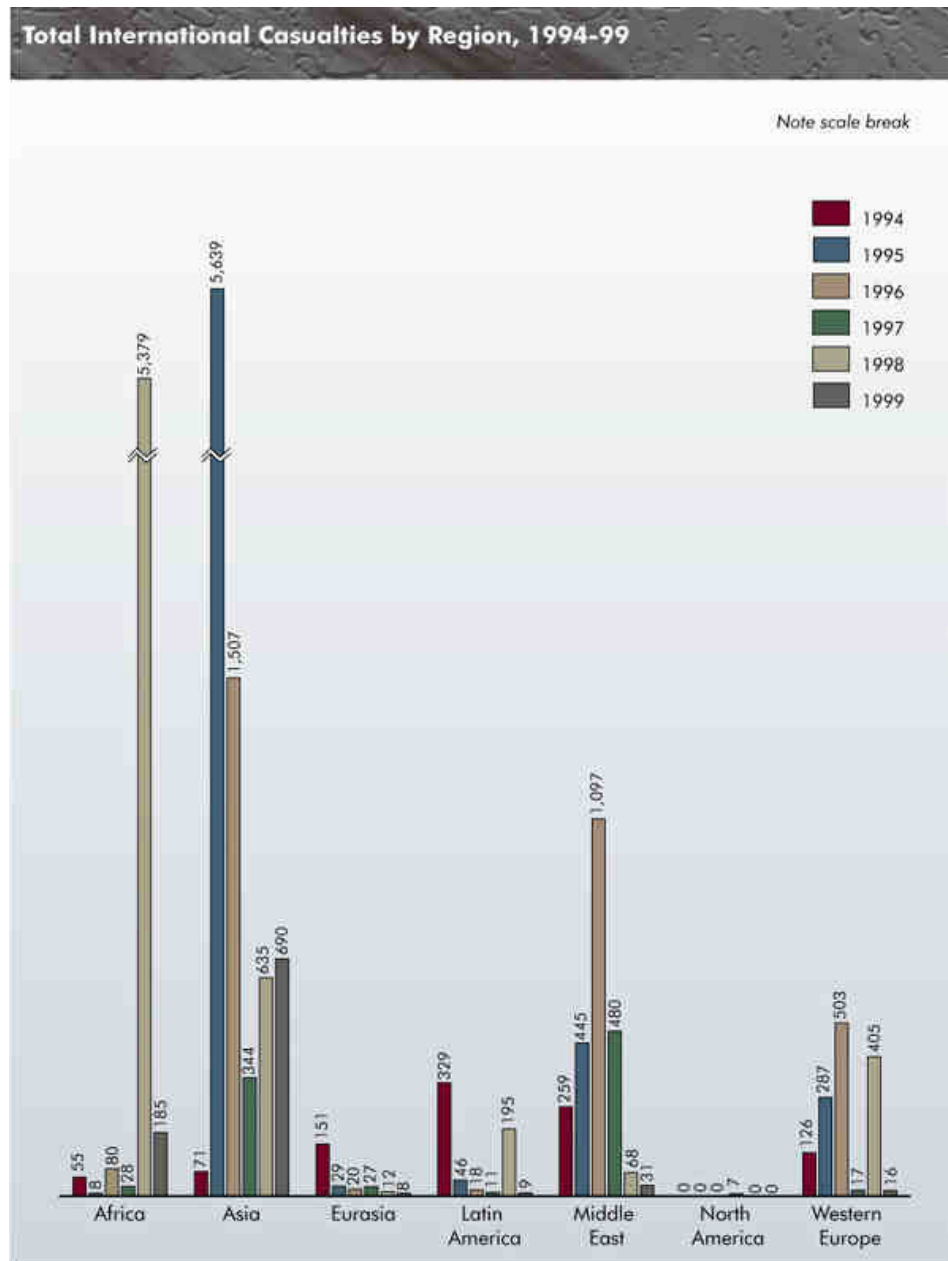


The first thing that should be immediately apparent is that terrorist attacks - or at least what the U.S. government considers terrorist attacks, which obviously does not include the acts committed *by* America or its various surrogates around the world - have shown an overall *decline* since reaching a peak in 1987. In fact, the years 1996-1998 showed the lowest levels of terrorist activity since the U.S. government started keeping records of such things. While there was a slight increase in the past year, the truth is that this increase was not by any means due to what any rational-minded person would consider 'terrorist' activity.

As the report acknowledges, the increase was due to three factors: "In Europe individuals mounted dozens of attacks to protest the NATO bombing campaign in Serbia and the Turkish authorities' capture of Kurdish Worker's Party (PKK) terrorist leader Abdullah Ocalan" and "radical youth gangs in Nigeria abducted and held for ransom more than three dozen foreign oil workers. The gangs held most of the hostages for a few days before releasing them unharmed." In other words, in some parts of the world there was active resistance to flagrantly illegal acts committed by the United States, which included: the destruction of the

infrastructure of a sovereign nation and the deliberate infliction of massive environmental damage on that same nation, all in violation of any number of international laws; the direct complicity in the kidnapping of the leader of a resistance movement leading a struggle against a corrupt U.S.-backed government whose 'ethnic cleansing' of Turkish and Iraqi Kurds has already claimed tens of thousands of lives, by the State Department's own figures; and the century-long exploitation of the planet by U.S. oil interests. The next two charts illustrate the gravity of the risk that we here in America face from terrorist attacks.





It would appear that the fear that we are encouraged to feel towards terrorist attacks may be just a little, shall we say, out of proportion to the actual risks. There have been exactly fifteen terrorist attacks in North America in the last six years resulting in exactly seven casualties. That's barely over one person per year killed or injured by a terrorist attack in *all* of North America. The reality is that the odds of becoming a victim of a terrorist attack in the United States are so slight as to be statistically insignificant. Perhaps the most amazing thing is that - given that the United States has been complicit in some of the most barbaric crimes against humanity of the past century, through the exercise of a foreign policy described by one former U.S. Attorney General as "the greatest crime since World War II" - there haven't been more attacks launched against the U.S.

But what, you may ask, about those 'rogue states,' designated by the State Department as "state sponsors of terrorism"? Surely they pose a threat, right? In truth, the seven nations listed as sponsors of terrorism - Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan, and Syria - do not even pose a regional threat, let alone a threat to the United States. And all of them have been the *victims* of illegal and unconscionable acts of terrorism by the United States.

Cuba has suffered through forty years of U.S.-imposed sanctions and every manner of

covert operation imaginable, including repeated assassination attempts, biological warfare attacks directed against food crops and livestock, industrial and economic sabotage, and that nasty little Bay of Pigs affair. All of this aggression towards the tiny island is of course to punish the Cuban people for having the gall to overthrow the rule of the criminally corrupt Fulgencio Batista, after the U.S. went to all the trouble to install him in power.

Iran was the victim of a bloody coup in 1953 - directed by Kermit Roosevelt (grandson of Teddy and cousin of FDR) and approved by John Foster Dulles - that resulted in the imposition of fascist rule by the U.S.-controlled Shah, who maintained power by means of SAVAK - the gestapo-like security force that resulted from the reorganization of the Iranian National Police by Brigadier General H. Norman Schwarzkopf (haven't I heard that name somewhere before?). In 1976, Amnesty International reported that SAVAK had the worst human rights record on the planet. The U.S. has continued to meddle in the affairs of the nation of Iran to the present day.

Iraq, for those with very short memories, has been the victim of a combination of bombings and sanctions for nearly ten years now. The infrastructure of the country is in a shambles, food and medical supplies are in short supply, sanitation is poor and disease runs rampant. Estimates of the death toll in the last decade run as high as two million - with 60% or more being children. Any purported terrorist acts committed by the nation of Iraq pale in comparison to the genocidal crimes being perpetrated against the Iraqi people by the United States.

Libya was the victim of an illegal and cowardly, unannounced, night-time bombing raid against a civilian population center ordered by President Reagan that resulted in numerous deaths. North Korea buried more than a million of its citizens in the 1950's due to U.S. military actions ordered by President Truman, and has endured sanctions and continual covert military operations ever since. The Sudan was the victim of an unprovoked cruise missile strike ordered by President Clinton that wiped out a pharmaceutical plant supplying the majority of antibiotics and other drugs to the region - resulting in countless thousands of deaths. Syria was the victim of a failed coup approved by the ubiquitous Dulles brothers and orchestrated by Kermit and Archibald Roosevelt (another of Teddy's grandsons).

Any alleged terrorist acts by these nations against U.S. interests are then - if not entirely justified - certainly understandable. But the truth is that most of them have not actually sponsored any terrorist acts for many years, even by the State Department's self-serving definition of what constitutes a terrorist act. Though the 1999 report goes to great lengths to conceal that fact, the prior year's report noted that: "there is no evidence of Libyan involvement in recent acts of international terrorism"; "there is no evidence of direct Syrian involvement in acts of international terrorism since 1986"; "Cuba no longer supports armed struggle in Latin America or elsewhere"; and "North Korea has not been linked definitively to any act of international terrorism since 1987." (5)

The report does note though that North Korea "continues to provide safehaven to terrorists who hijacked a Japanese airliner to North Korea in 1970." (5) And don't think that we've forgotten about that either. No, according to the more recent report: "The United States is committed to holding terrorists and those who harbor them accountable for past attacks, regardless of when the acts occurred. The United States has a long memory ..." (6) And we really know how to hold a grudge. Which is why we must track down these terrorists wherever they may lurk. According to the State Department, they can usually be found "seek(ing) refuge in 'swamps'." (6) If this is true, then U.S. intelligence forces should feel right at home wading in after them.

On a more serious note, it is abundantly clear that the call for yet more repressive police state measures has absolutely nothing to do with protecting the American people from international terrorism. The true agenda - the further repression of democratic rights in this country - couldn't be any more clear. And neither could the task before the American people

be any more clear. It's up to us to rid the world of the primary sponsor of international terrorism, and we'd better get started pretty goddamn soon.

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See also *Killing Hope*, by William Blum, for a more complete accounting of covert and overt military operations directed against Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Syria and a few dozen other countries.

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The LAPD Rages Against Democracy

Dave McGowan
August 2000

The name of the game was psychological warfare. The target was the American people, particularly those residing in or visiting Los Angeles. The goals were at least threefold: demonize the demonstrators long before they ever began assembling on the streets of L.A., intimidate as many of them as possible into not showing up or into leaving early, and justify the use of appalling levels of police state repression.

The plan began at least two years ago as "officers were assigned as early as 1998 to begin plans for crowd control and riot suppression." (1) The media was an eager participant, running such provocatively headlined articles as "Coroners Office Plans to Be Fully Staffed Through Convention," as the *L.A. Times* did on June 23rd. The not so subtle message? Exercising your constitutional right to free speech may very well cost you your life, which seems like a rather strange way to run a 'democracy.'

Another aspect of the plan apparently involved the staging of a 'riot' outside of the Staples Center following the L.A. Laker's recent championship win, and the subsequent staging of a non-response by the LAPD. That this was a wholly manufactured event should be abundantly clear to anyone critically examining what occurred. The notion that the heavily militarized and ridiculously over-equipped LAPD was unable - or too timid - to respond to this disturbance has no connection to reality.

Without doubt, the purpose of this fiasco was to elicit calls from the media for more decisive action to quell such unrest, and to thereby manufacture the appearance of a public outcry for *more aggressive policing* (and this from a department that had already given us the hyper-aggressive and feloniously corrupt CRASH units). And this is indeed precisely what happened. Of course, never did the media take notice of the fact that there is a considerable difference between a group of unruly sports fans on a drunken rampage and a group of peacefully and lawfully assembled political protesters. To equate the two - as the press and city officials have done repeatedly - is indicative of the mind-set of the LAPD and its media allies.

Allegedly tarnished and embarrassed by its feeble response to the Laker's melee - and properly chastised by the media - the department was now determined to respond in force to the slightest provocation - real or imagined. So when it was "faced with large street demonstrations and scattered acts of physical provocation, the LAPD was swift and punishing, a far cry from the department that allowed rambunctious Laker fans to burn cars after the team's recent championship victory." (3) Of course, the street demonstrations were actually fairly small, and the vast majority of the provoking was being done *by* the LAPD.

But never mind that; the department was now able to portray itself as being the whipping-boy no matter what its response. LAPD spokesman David Kalish was quick to do exactly that when he said that the department was in "almost a no-win situation. Some will view it as we waited too long, some will view it as moving too quickly," (4) which is both a little too predictable and a little too convenient.

We are now expected to feel sorry for the scandal-wracked department. Whether they're standing-by with their thumbs up their asses while rampaging sports fans fueled by drunken bravado run amok, or whether they're firing indiscriminately into a caged-in crowd of unarmed demonstrators working peacefully to save the last vestiges of democracy in this country, the beleaguered LAPD just can't seem to catch a break.

There is actually a strong possibility that the provocation in both cases was instigated by the LAPD itself. As the *Times* would later report, the department "has a particularly long and pungent history of spying on political dissenters dating to the 'Red Squad' of the 1930s that regularly broke up union and leftist meetings, hustling protesters to jail. Then, in the late 1970s and 1980s, it was learned that officers from the department's Public Disorder Intelligence Division had infiltrated left-wing groups and that others had spied on local politicians and critics of the Police Department." (5)

And the LAPD spooks were out in force in preparation for the DNC: "The Los Angeles Police Department calls them 'scouts,' and they are so good at their job that, during this week's protests, some were shot at and others were arrested - by their own colleagues ... Throughout the week, they have provided a key element in the Police Department's intelligence-gathering network, as they circulated unnoticed within crowds across the city ... the department now uses these officers routinely ... Federal and other local agencies also had undercover officers working inside the demonstrations this week." (5)

Is it really such a stretch to suggest that these agents provocateur were involved with instigating both the Laker's fiasco and the rock-throwing incident that triggered the LAPD rampage in the protest pit? The *L.A. Times* reported tellingly that these spook officers were in the thick of all the major confrontations (which weren't, by the way, very major) that occurred during the week of protests, including being in the line of fire at the now infamous police riot following the Rage Against the Machine concert. And make no mistake about it, a police riot was exactly what it was.

While the local press claimed that what occurred was a "response to a melee at a protest concert," (6) the truth is that there was no melee until the LAPD created one by opening fire and sending in club-wielding storm troopers. And while the *Times* may claim that "a few hundred protesters clashed with an extraordinarily forceful Los Angeles Police Department," (4) the reality is that but a handful of protesters 'clashed' with the police by throwing rocks at them - while the vast majority did nothing more than try to escape the unprovoked police onslaught. (8)

The reality is also that while LAPD mouthpiece Kalish would brazenly state that "Anyone with common sense would have left the area on their own volition when the violence reached such a high level," (7) more honest voices would report that "a commander at the scene ... announced that people would be given a 'reasonable' amount of time to exit ... Less than a minute after the announcement, rubber bullets started flying," and "The vast majority of concertgoers tried to follow the order to leave ... (but) police had closed off other possible exits." (8)

And finally, the truth is that while Kalish would also claim that "police were forced to react to the 'very violent demeanor of the crowd,'" (4) less biased accounts would note that the demeanor of the crowd was in fact overwhelmingly peaceful - even festive - and the police response was "like something out of the Third Reich ... Monday's downtown sweep was overkill by any standard." (1)

Labeling Monday night's actions as a police riot should not be interpreted to mean that

the response by the LAPD was spontaneous or that the officers were 'out of control.' Quite to the contrary, the actions of L.A.'s finest were very carefully planned and executed; it was in fact a very tightly choreographed police riot that followed a time-tested blueprint.

All the basic elements of the plan were in place at least a quarter-century ago, as reported by journalist Peter Watson, who conducted an exhaustive review of the available government research in the area of psychological warfare for his book *War on the Mind* (Hutchinson, 1978). In the chapter "Psychological Aspects of Population Control," Watson summarized the pertinent research in the area of crowd control:

"Far more specific studies have been carried out in respect of the behaviour of crowds. One man who has devoted a great deal of energy to these questions is Colonel Rex Applegate ... According to Applegate, the most frequent mistake which security forces make is not to use force early enough ... Basic psychological riot control measures ... should preferably, but not necessarily, be used in the following order:

Show of force: the surprise appearance of a large unit of specially equipped police in full view of the mob can have a huge psychological impact ...

Orders to disperse: ... They should be clear and fully communicated to the crowd, which usually means a powerful public address system. In large mobs, undercover men in plain clothes should be planted ...

Use of formations: this is the point, Applegate says, where psychological force has to be replaced with physical force ... The main point in training, however, is to instill into the riot squad the value of acting *as a group* and the psychological impact which a block of well-armed men in identical uniforms has on mobs. The men should all be trained so that they always occupy the same position in the unit and therefore know exactly where everybody else is ... Once movement is underway the squad should not stop ... if any single man is attacked his aides should immediately take his place, reinforcing the idea that the mob is dealing with a unit, not with individuals. The forward squads should not weaken themselves by making arrests; this is left to the back-up units in the rear of the patrol. After dispersal, the squads should actively and 'aggressively' patrol the area, picking up any individuals left in the vicinity to prevent the mob regrouping ...

The use of chemical agents and individual fire: if it is not possible to disperse the mob through the use of formations, then, says Applegate, 'chemical agents may be called for or selected fire from marksmen' ... What he recommends is for the police to fire into the ground in front of a marauding mob; this reduces the risk of fatalities, he says, and instead the ricochet bullets hit the lower parts of the body, injuring but not killing ... Upon first confronting a crowd, he writes, steps should be taken to show them that the police are armed *and* that their guns are loaded ...

The police should never be under too specific instructions as to what they can and can not do; the commander on the ground should have discretion ... Local criminals and professional 'fringe operators,' says Applegate, will normally join the riots for personal gain. Police intelligence should aim to stop it by routine road blocks and so forth." (10)

Nowhere will you find a more accurate description of the actions of the LAPD than in those words written more than twenty years ago. The only thing that has changed is that the police now use rubber bullets rather than firing into the ground, and the chemical agents employed today are more sophisticated than in the past. To see just how closely the LAPD adhered to these time-honored psychological warfare techniques, compare the following two passages, the first taken from reporter Charles Rappleye's account of the events following the Monday night concert, and the other taken from Peter Watson's book:

"a squad of 20 motorcycle cops pulled up from the rear. As those on foot made their way, the motorcycle officers rode to the front and fanned out across Figueroa from curb to curb. Then, after another pause, all 20 hit their lights and sirens and began a slow advance. The effect was

... an unnerving assault of light and sound, the piercing racket echoing off the glass walls of the downtown skyscrapers." (1)

"Not only is very loud noise extremely painful, but when it is pulsed at certain frequencies it can make people sick - even, in some cases, induce epilepsy ... in 1973 Allen International publicized a new machine - the 'photic driver' - which not only pulsed out sound that could reverberate off buildings, but also pulsed out flashing lights. This too can be reflected from the walls of public buildings, compounding its effect. The noise and light together are reported to have a marked nauseous effect on crowds and the risk of epilepsy is also said to be greater with this machine." (10)

What then, in the final analysis, are we to make of the LAPD's behavior during the Monday Night Melee? According to the venerable *L.A. Times* - the official voice of L.A. as brought to you by the good people at the Chicago Tribune - "many people, including some of (the LAPD's) most persistent critics, credited it with protecting liberty..." (3) Strangely though, while this article went on at some length, not a single legitimate critic of the department was quoted to support this conclusion. Instead, what was presented were shameless accolades from police-state apologists like Councilwoman Ruth Galanter ("It's a credit to all of us. It's a credit to the city") and the city's Human Relations Commission chairman, Joe Hicks ("What we saw over the last week or so was the epitome of human relations on the streets of L.A."). (3)

Elsewhere, a delegate from Michigan, Bill Hanner, was quoted as saying: "I don't even know what they're demonstrating about. I don't think they're doing a very good job of getting their message out, because we're very willing to listen." (9) Hanner apparently never considered that it is extraordinarily difficult to get your message out when you are busy dodging rubber bullets, choking on tear gas, and being ignored and/or denigrated by the media. And it's doubtful that Hanner - or any of his fellow delegates - bothered to walk over and find out what the demonstrations were about, given that it's very difficult to listen from inside the confines of the Staples Center.

The verdict, at any rate, is in. The LAPD is now basking in the glow of its self-proclaimed victory, and are not in any mood for naysayers. Spokesman Kalish made this clear when he dismissed criticism of his department with the remark: "It is unfortunate that some politicians have escalated the level of the rhetoric and participated in the dissemination of disinformation." (7) The shamelessness of the department's primary disseminator of disinformation apparently knows no bounds.

"As one veteran officer described it, the idea is to control crowds through intimidation. Lethal force is eschewed, but force of any other kind is maximized." (1)

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Postscript: On Thursday, August 24th, with the dust still settling from the DNC protests, forty-one former and current members of the Los Angeles Police Department filed a class action lawsuit in Los Angeles Superior Court against the department seeking \$100 million in damages. The officers claim that they were retaliated against with punishment and harassment after reporting acts of egregious police misconduct including fraud, perjury, false arrest, false imprisonment, and assorted civil rights violations. The lawsuit is targeted against the city and the LAPD brass, including Chief Bernard Parks, three captains and two lieutenants. At a news conference announcing the suit, some of the officers reported having received thinly veiled death threats. The attorney for the officers announced that he expects the suit to ultimately include from 300-400 plaintiffs, all with similar complaints. The department has always steadfastly maintained that no 'code of silence' exists among its officers, as have departments all across the country. According to an amazing number of its own men, that code of silence not only exists but is enforced with a vengeance. Meanwhile, at least seventy of the department's men remain under investigation in conjunction with the Rampart scandal.

Additional Reading:

Charles Rappleye of the *L.A. Weekly* on what really happened on Monday night:

<http://www.laweeklydaily.com/ink/00/04/news-rappleye.shtml>

Charles Rappleye again, this time on the shameless praise heaped on the LAPD:

<http://www.laweekly.com/ink/00/40/news-rappleye1.shtml>

Howard Blume, also of the *L.A. Weekly*, on the shooting of civil rights attorney Carol Sobel - right between the eyes: <http://www.laweeklydaily.com/ink/00/04/news-blume.shtml>

Ben Ehrenreich of the *L.A. Weekly* catalogues the misdeeds of the LAPD during the DNC:

<http://www.laweekly.com/ink/00/40/news-ehrenreich.shtml>

FAIR (Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting) on the disinformational reports in the mainstream media of the events of Monday night: <http://www.fair.org/activism/democratic-convention.html>

John Andrews of the *World Socialist Web Site* on the use of spies by the LAPD:

<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2000/aug2000/lapd-a24.shtml>

John Seeley of the *L.A. Weekly* on the seemingly deliberate targeting of reporters by the

LAPD: <http://www.laweekly.com/ink/00/40/news-seeley.shtml>

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Death, Taxes and Education

Dave McGowan
November 2000

October 16th is not, as it turns out, a good day to travel by air if you happen to be a politician who has become, shall we say, troublesome. Missouri Governor Mel Carnahan found that out the hard way this year when he hopped aboard a chartered plane to get to a campaign appearance with less than three weeks to go before the November election. He never made it.

Carnahan had been making a run for a U.S. Senate seat, challenging Republican incumbent John Ashcroft in what the *L.A. Times* described as "one of the tightest, fiercest - and most closely watched - Senate races in the country." (2) Just before his campaign was abruptly ended, "a few recent polls ha[d] showed him with a slight edge," (1) breaking a months long deadlock.

Carnahan had some pretty nutty ideas for a would-be Senator, though. He had doubled funding for public schools during his eight years as governor, and had "championed one of the most generous public health insurance plans in the nation, extending free coverage to all children in families with incomes up to three times the poverty line." (2) Perhaps craziest of all, Carnahan had actually commuted the death sentence of a man scheduled for execution.

There were, inevitably it seems, some curious facts about the crash that took Carnahan's life (attributed by official reports to inclement weather). One initial account, for example, noted that "residents of rural Jefferson County reported hearing a loud explosion ... and at least one reported seeing a fireball against the stormy sky." (1) That would tend to indicate that the plane was destroyed *in the air*, before it 'crashed' to the ground. If so, that would also explain why "NTSB investigators have found a football-sized piece of the plane's engine more than a quarter-mile from most of the plane's wreckage, something agency spokeswoman Carol Carmody called unusual." (3)

It would also explain why authorities had initially said that "they would not identify the wreckage - or any bodies they might recover - until [Tuesday] morning," (1) though by the next day, the story being reported was that "up to 50 investigators from several agencies spent Tuesday combing the rocky gully where the plane crashed. The search for aircraft parts and human remains is expected to continue for several days." (2) You would think that if the plane was intact when it 'crashed,' pretty much all the wreckage and remains would be in one spot, and wouldn't really be all that hard to find. Go figure.

The press noted that Carnahan's death "was an eerie echo for Missouri of a 1976 plane crash that killed Senate hopeful Jerry Litton as he flew to a celebration after winning the Democratic primary." (2) I guess those Republicans in Missouri really play hardball. There

was another eerie echo as well, of another flight that ended tragically on October 16th. That was the day that U.S. Representatives Hale Boggs and Nicholas Begich caught their last plane flight as well, in 1972.

Boggs was, for those who have forgotten, a member of the notorious Warren Committee and later one of the most outspoken critics of the infamous report issued by that committee. Boggs had questioned the preposterous single bullet theory and had openly accused J. Edgar Hoover's FBI of running a massive wiretapping and blackmail operation to pressure Congress into accepting the report's patently bogus findings. His flight allegedly disappeared over Alaska and was, by official reports anyway, never recovered. In an interesting side note, the young man who gave Boggs a lift to the airport that fateful day was none other than William Jefferson Clinton. (4) Small world.

The Carnahan story, by the way, has something of a happy ending (though not for the Carnahan family, which also lost the governor's son in the crash). The people of Missouri, possibly sensing that something wasn't quite right about Carnahan's untimely death, defied expectations and chose to elect the corpse rather than the incumbent. Hats off to the good people of Missouri.

While we're on the subject of untimely deaths, I should probably mention another that occurred just weeks ago. Remember when some guy ran his truck into author Steven King not long ago and banged Spooky Steve up pretty good? And remember how Steve was really pissed off about it, and how he thought that the courts let the guy off way too easy? Damned if that guy didn't turn up dead in his home of unknown causes. Shit happens, I guess.

On a completely different topic, did you see where another blatantly fraudulent Hollywood 'liberal' exposed his true fascist leanings? We're talking here, of course, about Martin "I'm not the president, I just play him on TV, though I was offered the Green Party candidacy before they ended up going with Ralph" Sheen.

Sheen took a lead role in lobbying for the defeat of California's Proposition 36, a perfectly sensible initiative that would put non-violent drug offenders into treatment rather than sending them to prison. Bad idea, said the honorary chairman of the 'No on 36' campaign. No, Sheen thinks we should just keep stuffing bodies into our already grotesquely bloated prisons for the 'crime' of ingesting drugs that do not have state approval, though his own drug ingesting son has received, shall we say, rather lax treatment from the California courts.

Quite a progressive stance the 'liberal' actor has taken. I haven't really seen anything quite like it since Warren "I'm so fucking liberal that I once made a movie about the Russian Revolution" Beatty rose to lead the applause for the repellent Elia Kazan at last year's Oscar ceremony, shortly after his movie *Bulworth* established him as Hollywood's leading 'liberal.' That, of course, came just in time to confirm his credentials in the event he was called upon to campaign for president.

It's good to know there's no shortage of phony liberals to prop up as presidential hopefuls. That way, we don't have to worry about any truly progressive-minded politicians sneaking into office. Before moving on, it should be noted that Sheen's over-hyped television show, *The West Wing*, ranks as some of the most thinly transparent state propaganda to masquerade as entertainment programming since *The FBI* hit the airwaves.

I mean, are we really supposed to believe that the White House is full of decent, caring men and women struggling mightily to do what's right for the country and the people? You mean they're not a bunch of depraved, conscienceless corporate stooges? What the hell was I thinking? And it must be true, since the show employs any number of 'former' White House officials as writers and advisers, to ensure accuracy of course.

But enough about that. What I really wanted to talk about was how badly I've been getting ripped off every time I run to the store for a pack of smokes. That is in part due to the actions of another phony Hollywood 'liberal,' Rob "I'm not really a meathead, I just played

one on TV" Reiner, who lobbied to get a massive tax imposed on cigarettes, allegedly to strike a major blow to the tobacco companies.

Another major contributing factor has been the numerous lawsuits filed by the state against the tobacco lords, leading to massive monetary judgments. All of this is supposed to demonstrate that the government is getting serious about cracking down on the merchants of death, a scenario that would perhaps be a little more credible were it not for the fact that the tobacco giants, along with the country's other corporate cartels, pretty much *are* the government. How then are we to explain the seeming contradiction of the state attacking one of its own?

The answer lies in a basic principle of economics. For those fortunate enough not to have suffered through an economics course, the discipline maintains that the 'free market' will magically determine an equilibrium price for every commodity, based on competition and on relative levels of supply and demand.

If supply exceeds demand, prices will be driven down. When demand exceeds available supplies, prices go up. The market will therefore determine the optimal price of the commodity, preventing - among other things - price gouging by unscrupulous suppliers of goods and services. That is how the magical free market is supposed to work; there are a few problems with the concept, however.

First of all, economics rather piously touts itself as a 'positive' science, to distance itself from the behavioral sciences, which are derisively referred to as 'normative' sciences. Economics is, in other words, supposedly a real science, built on a foundation of irrefutable natural laws, as opposed to those pseudo-sciences based on 'norms' of human behavior.

In truth though, those natural laws - which essentially state that supply will always be finite, while human greed will always be infinite - are not laws at all, but value judgments. Economics is actually not a science at all, but a philosophy, and one based on a decidedly depraved view of human nature.

While it may be true that human greed certainly appears in modern-day America to know no bounds, that is the result of decades of state propaganda and educational and psychological indoctrination. Anthropological evidence (Oops, I forgot - that's one of those bullshit normative sciences, isn't it?) has long suggested that unbridled greed is not in fact a universal feature of humanity.

The 'science' of economics essentially takes a human characteristic that is the result of socialization by the capitalist state, and portrays that as a natural law that justifies the very existence of that state. A pretty ballsy scam actually, but that really has little to do with the main point I was trying to make.

The point here is that even if we accept the pseudo-science of economics at face value, the system does not work if a product has an 'inelastic demand.' What this means is that the demand for that particular product remains relatively constant regardless of price fluctuations. Inelastic demand is a result of, in the simplest possible terms, addiction.

Because we are addicted to the vile products of the tobacco lords, we will buy their goods at virtually any price. The cartel chiefs, of course, know this. That's why they don't really mind raising the price of cigarettes; they just need a justification for doing so, so as not to look like the thieves that they are. That is where their government lackeys come into play.

By posing as the public servants that they are supposed to be, crusading politicians attack the tobacco giants, imposing new taxes and securing enormous legal settlements. The result is a new source of revenue for the state, while the corporations maintain - and in most cases actually increase - their profits. Everyone wins, except of course for the consumers, who once again get fucked.

What is really at play here is a clever form of covert taxation that allows politicians to bask in the populist glow of having won a great victory against the forces of corporate irresponsibility, while at the very same time imposing a decidedly non-populist regressive tax.

And it is, make no mistake about it, a regressive tax.

A regressive tax is, according to the economists, a tax that disproportionately targets the lower income brackets. This is in contrast to a progressive tax, which is supposed to disproportionately target those in the best position to pay. The federal income tax is allegedly such a tax, though phony liberals like Jerry Brown would like to flatten it.

The reason that doubling the price of cigarettes is a regressive tax is not because only poor people smoke, but because wealthy smokers, by and large, don't really give a shit whether they're paying \$2 or \$4 a pack. Either way, it's pocket change. But to someone living paycheck to paycheck, or worse, it makes a hell of a difference.

The rapidly rising cost of cigarettes is not, by a long shot, the only covert regressive tax being foisted on the American people. Soaring gasoline prices fall into that category as well. Like the tobacco lords, the oil cartels have had a cozy relationship with the U.S. ship of state for decades, going back to the days of John D. Rockefeller.

And as with cigarettes, we are addicted to the products offered us by the oil industry, for we are addicted to our cars. This addiction has been actively nurtured by the oil and auto cartels for decades, who have worked diligently to sabotage and propagandize against any meaningful proposals for public transportation systems.

We are also addicted, by our lifestyles, to the electricity and natural gas that heat and power our homes. These are also, strangely enough, beginning to drastically increase in cost. This is yet another emerging regressive tax, and others will no doubt follow.

Let's see now, what else do I have to bitch about? How about our schools? Everybody else seems to be bitching about them, so what the hell. Our educational system is a disgrace, an international embarrassment. But fear not, for Washington has some great ideas on how to fix our schools. The key words seem to be 'testing' and 'vouchers.'

Both of our illustrious presidential candidates have proposed extensive testing of our schools. They have not, mind you, proposed actually providing any funds or resources to improve our schools. No, we can't just keep throwing money at the problem, though in truth precious little money has been thrown that direction for many years now.

What we really need to do, according to our fearless leaders, is to test the schools in their currently grossly under-funded conditions, apparently to verify what is already known - that many of our schools are under-performing. Once they are identified, the solution is to shut them down.

The only difference between the candidates' positions seemed to be the frequency of testing and the speed with which they would shut down 'failing schools.' The Bush boy is for more frequent testing, but the Gore kid has taken a no-nonsense approach to school closures. During the debates, he sounded as though he was ready to assemble a federal goon squad to criss-cross the country to begin padlocking schools.

Not to worry, though. The Washington gang has another plan as well - vouchers. After your kid's school is closed, you might be lucky enough to get a voucher to send them to a private school, where they can allegedly get a good education. The only problem is that the voucher won't even come close to actually paying for a private education, and if you can't make up the difference, you're shit-out-of-luck.

And your elected leaders couldn't care less. In fact, they couldn't care less about your local school's test scores either. The dirty truth is that they never did care. Public education was never about learning the curriculum offered and gaining an informed view of the world.

Nothing, in fact, could pose a greater threat to the state than an informed populace. Luckily then, public schools have never been about imparting knowledge. They have always been about *how* that knowledge is delivered. The process is what was important. (5)

Public schooling did not arise from some benevolent desire by the ruling powers to offer education to the masses. It arose as a necessary outgrowth of the industrial revolution, which was, in essence, a process whereby archaic concepts such as 'skilled labor' and 'craftsmanship'

were discarded in favor of mass production by largely unskilled assembly-line workers.

It required a fundamental change in the American labor pool. What was thenceforth needed were masses of interchangeable laborers willing to perform meaningless, unfulfilling, regimented and repetitive tasks day in and day out, year in and year out. Also required was a mindless obedience to authority, an ingrained awareness of the importance of punctuality, and a thorough socialization of the values of the corporate state.

The way to achieve those goals - to churn out endless numbers of mindless, robotic workers - was through public education. In truth, our public schools have never been 'failing;' they have performed wonderfully at the task for which they were designed. To be sure, they have failed to truly educate, to produce students capable of independent thought, but they were never designed to do that.

Now the concept of public education appears to be headed for the dustbin, and this really shouldn't come as any surprise. I don't know if anyone's noticed, but the industrial age is pretty much over. We are now in what is being heralded as the 'information age,' and the American workforce is once again being transformed. Rapidly disappearing are all those industrial jobs that once needed to be filled with a steady source of bodies.

In other words, in the eyes of our leaders, public schooling has lost its purpose. What this means for future generations of Americans is, to put it bluntly, you are not needed. The state has no desire to impart knowledge to you, and no reason to condition you for jobs that no longer exist.

The good news is that you need not worry about becoming some random, insignificant cog in the wheel. The bad news is that the state has no other use for you either. You have become, in the immortal words of Adolf Hitler, a generation of "useless eaters." Sorry to have to break the news to you.

Moving on then to other areas of interest, I see where Sammy "The Bull" Gravano was arrested recently in Arizona. (6) For those who are unfamiliar with Gravano, he was a prominent member of the John Gotti crime family who turned state's evidence against his former boss. For this, he was given a new identity and placed in the Witness Protection Program. He was also essentially given a free ride on no less than nineteen brutal murders to which he confessed.

Maybe if he had killed twenty people, the authorities would have considered actually prosecuting Gravano. Instead, they set him up with a new name and apparently a little plastic surgery, and he promptly set up shop in Arizona. But I'm sure it was worth the price the state paid to put Gotti away, though he would have been out of commission much earlier if the FBI hadn't protected him and colluded in sabotaging his previous trials. (7)

Gravano was born in 1945, served as a corporal in the U.S. Army for two years, and performed his first contract killing shortly after that -- the shooting of crime boss Joseph Collucci in February of 1970. At one point in his life of crime, Gravano enlisted the services of boxing trainer Teddy Atlas, who sent Sammy to a hypnotist -- a key element of his training regimen. Atlas' past clients included Mike Tyson. (8)

Gravano's killing years came to an end in December of 1990, when he and Gotti were arrested. Sammy was held in an isolation unit for ten months, after which he became extremely cooperative, so he was transferred to Quantico to hang out with his old friends at the FBI. His subsequent testimony put no less than 37 people in prison, including Gotti. (8)

Gravano was set free on April 19, 1995 -- just in time to celebrate Hitler's birthday. After entering the Witness Protection Program, Sammy decided to co-author a book with Peter Maas, which he promoted by making a number of high-profile media and public appearances, seemingly oblivious to the fact that the code of *Omerta* called for his immediate termination. Rather preposterously, he wasn't killed. (8)

Lucky guy that he is, an appellate court in New York ruled that Sammy could keep the nearly one million dollars in profits that he reaped from the book and from a movie

development deal. The state's Crime Victims Board had argued that the 'Son of Sam' law prohibited him from profiting from his crimes, but the court ruled otherwise. (9)

Following that, Gravano quickly busied himself with setting up a massive drug trafficking ring. According to the charges filed against him, Gravano controlled all the Ecstasy traffic in the state of Arizona, a multi-million dollar operation run through Gravano's construction company. Some of the money was allegedly laundered through his ex-wife's Italian restaurant, just like in the movies. (6)

Gravano was also allegedly the head of a white supremacist cult composed primarily of local high school athletes. Calling themselves the 'Devil Dogs,' the group reportedly had a fondness for brutally beating random victims who didn't meet their high Aryan standards. The teenagers also functioned as Gravano's muscle, and as his street level drug distribution network. (6)

Adding to Gravano's legal woes, he and his son were hit with another federal complaint in Brooklyn accusing them of procuring their Ecstasy supply from a New York gang. Additional charges filed in Arizona allege that Sammy also put out a contract on the life of New York defense attorney Ron Kuby, who represents some of the survivors of Gravano's nineteen murder victims. (10)

Of course, the federally protected mass murderer had allegedly built this empire without the knowledge of authorities. Sounds reasonable to me, though you have to wonder why the CIA would miss out on a party that included neo-Nazis, drug traffickers, 'Devil Dogs' and Mafioso.

One final topic needs to be discussed here for the skeptics in the crowd. In my book, *Derailing Democracy*, I wrote that: "Well known among State Department and intelligence personnel, though not among the American people, is the U.S. desire to unleash the power of tactical nuclear weaponry upon the world." Absurd, scoffed the critics.

Eighteen months after those words were written, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that: "For more than 50 years, there has been a taboo against unleashing the terrible power of the atom in war, but some in the U.S. nuclear weapons establishment and their political allies now envision a world where nuclear combat could become almost a commonplace event. Sound crazy? Unfortunately, it's true." (11) I hate to say I told you so, but ...

The *Chronicle* went on to note that: "Top Senate Republicans already have pushed through a measure that will allow U.S. weapons labs to begin studies on a so-called 'mini-nuke,' intended not to deter a potential enemy but for use in small, regional wars ... The aim would be to kill national leaders such as Saddam Hussein or Slobodan Milosevic, or to destroy stocks of biological/chemical weapons held by so-called 'rogue states'." (11)

So at least they will be put to good use, though to use a nuclear bomb to assassinate an individual seems like it might border on overkill. You might want to cut back on the coffee there at the war planning room, guys. I suppose I should mention that assassinating a foreign head of state, with a nuke or otherwise, is a rather flagrant violation of international law.

I really like the idea of using the little nukes to blow up chemical/biological weapons caches though. That way, we can disperse the toxic agents *and* throw in a healthy dose of radiation as well. A profoundly depraved idea that could only come from the military leaders of a seriously fucking dangerous and out-of-control country.

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*The center for an
informed America*

The Unelectable Son

*Dave McGowan
November 10, 2000*

Those crazy Bush boys really seem to have fucked up this time. If you haven't done so lately, get up from your computer, walk outside and take a few deep breaths. Did you catch a whiff of that stench drifting across the country? If I'm not mistaken, it seems to be coming from the state of Florida. The drive to put chosen son George W. into the White House just might have gotten a little out of control.

It's been pretty clear for some time now that George was the chosen one. The problem was that George is a pretty tough sell as a presidential candidate. He is after all - can we be honest here? - an unfathomably stupid and shallow man. So even with enormous sums of money behind him, and the rather obvious support of the corporate media, it was an uphill battle for the Bush clan.

Winning the primary was easy enough, especially after the only real competitor - John McCain - took a dive by denouncing the Christian Coalition, the kiss of death for a Republican candidate. That left just a bunch of rather comical contenders like Gary Bauer and Alan Keyes to deal with. Keyes, by the way, was apparently supposed to represent the 'diversity' of the Republican Party, which he rather bizarrely did by simultaneously channeling Jesse Jackson and Pat Buchanan.

As for McCain, he had shown that even a hideously fraudulent 'reformer' could kick Bush's ass in the primaries, so he had to bow out. You overplayed your part there a little bit, John. Maybe it was that whole "pity me for the mistreatment I suffered at the hands of my Vietnamese captors after I indiscriminately dumped Napalm on their children" approach. Be that as it may, with the admiral's son out of the race, Bush basically picked up the Republican nomination by default.

The general election was a little tougher though. Senator Bob Smith could have posed a real problem when he denounced the Republican Party as too liberal for his tastes and bolted the party to run as a far-right 'Independent.' Fortunately though, Smith quickly saw the error of his ways and bolted back to the flock, where he was received - not surprisingly - with open arms.

The Reform Party could have posed a real problem as well. Candidate Ross Perot had, after all, siphoned off a considerable number of Republican votes in the last two presidential contests. But not this year. No, this was the year that saw the Reform Party gloriously implode, producing the ludicrously fascistic Pat Buchanan as a candidate, whose campaign commercials were so over-the-top that it's hard to imagine anyone taking his candidacy seriously.

It was also, notably, the year that the Reform Party stopped receiving media exposure and invitations to the debates. But even with no one else in the race to tap conservative votes, Bush was such an absurd candidate that he couldn't hope to defeat even as weak an opponent as Al Gore.

Pollsters struggled mightily to suggest otherwise. For weeks now, while calling the polls 'statistical deadlocks,' Bush has been portrayed as consistently out-polling Gore by a margin of from three to six points. The popular vote count showed this to be complete bullshit, however, and likely an effort to create a self-fulfilling prophecy, as well as to condition the American people to accept a Bush victory.

The truth was that getting George into the White House was not an easy task. The sudden emergence of the Green Party, which had been dormant for ages, certainly helped. Interestingly, Nader's campaign got considerably more, and better, press than did Buchanan's, a major shift from previous years.

But even with a spoiler on the left, and one given at least limited legitimacy, the Bush campaign was in trouble. Even though Gore seemed at times to be working on sabotaging his own campaign - such as distancing himself from Clinton, who is, despite being thoroughly corrupt, unquestionably the most popular politician in the country - Bush remained seemingly unelectable.

Even when George, Sr.'s supposed nemesis, H. Ross Perot, and George Jr.'s purported arch rival, John McCain, jumped on board the Bush team bearing ringing endorsements, the American people appeared unconvinced. Even the endorsements of such notable war criminals as Colin Powell and Norman Schwarzkopf didn't seem to help much.

Apparently though, those Bush boys just don't know when to throw in the towel. The operative principal seems to have been: when all else fails, resort to massive voter fraud. And if you're going to steal an election, where better to do it than in Jeb Bush's Florida, where rabidly fascist anti-Castro Cubans and assorted Mafioso have long specialized in dirty tricks.

Make no mistake about it, the evidence of fraud is overwhelming. Among the numerous voting 'irregularities' reported are:

- Nine ballot boxes were reported missing in Broward County. This was disputed by an election supervisor, who claimed that nothing was missing, though numerous ballot boxes had taken longer to receive than expected. The official conceded though that one box was left behind at a polling station -- by an inexperienced volunteer, naturally. It was later reported that at least four boxes were 'forgotten' overnight in Broward and Miami-Dade counties.
- Thousands of voters have reported being turned away at the polls with claims that ballots had run out, because their names had conveniently disappeared from the lists of registered voters, or because the polling locations had illegally closed with voters still waiting in line to vote; some have alleged willful destruction of ballots from Democratic precincts.
- In at least one precinct, in Leon County, the Florida Highway Patrol set up a police checkpoint near a polling place and, according to angry voters, intimidated blacks attempting to reach the polls.
- Abandoned ballot boxes seem to be popping up more frequently than Elvis sightings. Boxes were found in three different Palm Beach County schools, as well as in an upscale, gated residential community. All were allegedly empty. Another was found in a Miami church. Yet another was discovered on Friday at the Sheraton Hotel and impounded by the Miami Police.
- Also in Palm Beach, calls flooded in complaining of a confusing ballot which caused many voters to mistakenly cast their vote for Pat Buchanan rather than Gore. In the staunchly Democratic county, Buchanan received 3,407 votes, nearly three-and-a-half times his tally in any other Florida county. Given the purported margin of 'victory' in the state's popular vote, these ballots alone would be enough to throw the election to Gore.
- In that same Palm Beach County, another 19,000 ballots were disqualified because voters had punched more than one hole, again due to the deceptive ballot design. These ballots

presumably would have heavily favored Gore.

- Another 1,600 ballots cast primarily for Gore were voided due to what was described as a 'computer glitch.'
- One of the men primarily responsible for getting out the Republican vote, particularly absentee ballots, was previously declared guilty of massive voter fraud in his run for mayor of Miami in 1997. So blatant was the fraud that his election victory was overturned by the courts and a number of officials were convicted.
- In Plantation, a school that was to have served as a polling place was torn down just three weeks before election day, and many voters were not informed of the location of the new polling place.
- London's Independent has reported that a 71-year-old pastor observed two men suspiciously loitering at a polling location bearing armloads of what appeared to be ballots. The pastor told his story to the Independent after local police and reporters refused to report on or investigate his claims.

The problem now is that the fraud is so obvious as to border on the absurd. A large sector of the population has already caught a whiff of the stench wafting in from the country's southeastern appendage, and a slew of lawsuits have already been filed by private citizens and local officials. This surely creates a bit of a problem for the Bush boys. What to do now?

They could choose to stay the course, attempting to perpetuate the fraud and sweep George into the White House, the people be damned. As the sense that something is rotten in Florida grows among the American people though, this could bring a rather hostile reaction from a fairly broad spectrum of the population. Even with Gore playing along and conceding defeat, this might not play too well.

The smarter thing to do, it seems, is to swing the election back to Gore, without of course admitting to massive voter fraud. Perhaps some voting improprieties could be admitted to, while blaming lower level, overzealous staffers. There would naturally be a good deal of hostility to Gore from the other side of the aisle, but that's all a part of the game anyway.

A relentless attack on a Gore presidency would serve the same function as it did with the Clinton presidency - to create the illusion of a liberal administration while a reactionary agenda is pursued, thereby keeping the American 'left' confused and steadfastly behind another false idol. But, like I said, that would be the smart thing to do, and in case I haven't mentioned it yet, George isn't real bright.

That reminds me of a question I've been meaning to ask. The Bush family have long been big fans of eugenics programs, and have themselves been careful not to marry 'outside their class,' so to speak. But doesn't the fact that generations of selective breeding have produced such an extraordinarily stupid man refute the eugenics beliefs of his forbears? Just checking.

Anyway, it seems a near certainty that with the chosen son so close to the White House, the Bush team will push on. The media will gamely play along, portraying Gore as the villain for being a whiny, poor loser. Every effort will be made to turn public opinion against the vice-president, and in favor of the Bush crime family. This is not necessarily a bad thing, however.

Even with a national media consensus for Gore to graciously step aside, a large swath of the American people will view the Bush presidency as fundamentally illegitimate. Adding to the hostility will be the overtly reactionary agenda that the Bush team will pursue, which is not to be confused with the covertly reactionary agenda pursued for the last eight years by Mr. Bill, though the results are largely the same.

Bush will likely go so far as to claim some sort of imaginary mandate from the people. And maybe, just maybe, that will be enough to awake the country from its slumber. Maybe the country needs an embarrassingly dim-witted son of an extraordinarily corrupt political family foisted into power against the will of the people through a transparently fraudulent

election, and committed to pursuing a decidedly anti-democratic agenda. If that isn't enough to get the people up off their asses, then there is little hope that anything will.

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The Unelectable Son, Part II

Dave McGowan
November 15, 2000

"The outcome of this election will not be the result of ... efforts to mold public opinion."
George W. Bush robotically reciting a statement to the press on November 15, 2000

Actually, that is exactly what the outcome will be the result of. While the media continues to make a concerted and absolutely shameless effort to steer public opinion into supporting a Bush presidency, evidence continues to mount of a massive, well-planned (though sloppily executed) operation to steal the vote in the state of Florida, brought to you courtesy of the Bush family.

As details emerge, it is difficult to tell which is more amazing - the brazenness of the fraud perpetrated on the people of this country, or the complete refusal of the media to acknowledge what is painfully obvious. What is also obvious is that the media, and *both* political parties, desperately want the whole thing to go away as soon as possible.

It is not likely that it is Al Gore and his campaign team that are delaying the completion of the Bush coup. More likely, it is public outrage that has forced Gore to put up at least the illusion of a fight. Essentially, he is just buying time until public opinion can be sufficiently brought under control by the all-powerful media.

One of the more telling details to emerge concerns the role played by a *Fox News* official on election night. As readers will recall, the state of Florida was originally called in favor of Gore, based on the results of exit polls (a very reliable indicator assuming that ballots are accurately cast and counted). At that time, the Bush team abandoned their prior plans and retreated to the seclusion of the governor's mansion.

Not long after, the networks took the state back from Gore and declared it "too close to call," offering little in the way of explanation. Still later in the night, the networks gave the state to Bush, and every effort was made to present that as the final, authoritative decision. The earlier call for Gore, purportedly, had been a rush to judgment.

The first network to swing the state to Bush was the *Fox News Channel*, followed (within *four minutes*) by all the usual suspects - *CNN*, *ABC*, *CBS*, *NBC* and *MSNBC*. The call was made, strangely enough, not based on reports from the *Voters News Service*, as would be customary, but on the sole discretion of a *Fox* official.

The fact that such a crucial call was made on the authority of a single news executive - with no supporting documentation - is by itself rather disturbing. Far more disturbing is that the official, John Ellis, is a first cousin of George and Jeb Bush, and he has acknowledged having been in frequent contact with both of the Bush boys on election night.

What we have here then is a presidential election that hinged on a state controlled by a member of the Bush clan, with that state being declared for candidate Bush by yet another member of the Bush clan (who had been hired by *Fox* just a month before the election). The media immediately fell in line behind this scam, prompting Gore to nearly offer a public concession, wrapping things up before anyone realized what the hell had happened.

It's almost too obvious a scandal to even be believed. Is the Bush family really so arrogant as to believe that they can get away with literally anything? *Can they* in fact get away with it? Are Americans so thoroughly conditioned to accepting their media-supplied points of view that they will allow this to stand?

The corruption evident in Volusia County alone is enough to warrant not just a recount, but a *re-vote* and a thorough investigation. At one point on the night of the election, Gore was leading Bush by 21,000 votes in the county. Within a half an hour, Gore's tally had *dropped* by 16,000 votes, while candidate David McReynolds had somehow picked up 10,000 of his own. In the final tally, McReynolds - a Socialist Party candidate - was credited with a grand total of just nine votes.

This discrepancy has yet to be explained. Other irregularities throughout the county were explained away as harmless error and simple misunderstanding. For example, one election worker left the ballot collection area carrying two uninspected bags, prompting a call to the sheriff. The *Washington Post* explained though that the worker was "merely taking home dirty laundry." Say what? For what possible reason would a worker be lugging two bags of dirty laundry around a ballot collection area?

Excuse my frankness here, but reading news accounts such as this should really piss you off. Implicit in such coverage is the message that the media thinks you are stupid - a real fucking idiot. So stupid and gullible, in fact, that you'll go along with wrapping-up this sham election, sweeping all the ugliness under the rug, and propping up George Bush as an illegitimate president.

At any rate, Volusia County experienced other irregularities as well. Six precincts were unable to transfer their results due to the proverbial computer glitch; the county's returns were not received until 3 A.M., leaving a considerable amount of time during which the ballots could have been altered in any number of ways.

On Wednesday, as a recount was underway, a poll worker dropped off a bag of ballots that had allegedly spent the night in his car. Two days later, three more ballot bags were found in a vault, one with a broken seal, one without a seal, and the third lying open with ballots spilling out. All of this nonsense, we are supposed to believe, is a normal part of any election.

Put any election under such scrutiny, the media mantra goes, and you will find such irregularities. This is absolute nonsense. These were not random, motiveless mistakes that were made; this was a concerted effort to disenfranchise targeted sectors of the population.

As the *Palm Beach Post* reported, almost half of the disqualified ballots in Palm Beach County came from predominately black and elderly precincts. Throughout the county, seven percent of ballots were thrown out. In precincts where most residents are over age 65, the figure rose to ten percent, and in black precincts, sixteen percent - one in six ballots - were disqualified.

Similarly, the *Miami Herald* has reported that the same pattern was followed in Miami-Dade County. Countywide, the percentage of voided ballots was 2.7 percent. In some two dozen black precincts, however, the rate was from eight to eleven percent. In the precinct with the highest rate of 'double punching' (10.98%), fully 99 percent of the non-disqualified votes went to Gore.

Duval County followed the same pattern. *Salon*, an on-line magazine, reported that nearly half of the 27,000 disqualified ballots in that county came from just four of its fourteen districts. Those districts' residents are, oddly enough, primarily black and almost all are Democrats.

The propagandists would have you believe that such irregularities are due to the fact that blacks and the elderly are too stupid (yuck, yuck) to understand the ballots, and have therefore essentially forfeited their right to vote. The truth though is that the elderly appear to have been deliberately targeted with deceptive ballots, so that they could then be publicly ridiculed.

And according to *The Times (UK)*, as many as 17,000 ballots given primarily to black voters had already been marked for a rival candidate, automatically disqualifying them when another candidate was selected. In light of the sheer volume of irregularities, and of the tens of thousands of voters who were affected, it is patently absurd to write the Florida vote off as 'business as usual.'

A few irregularities would be understandable, but the reports trickling out from Florida indicate wholesale corruption: ballot boxes going missing, ballot boxes reappearing (which may or may not be the boxes that went missing, and may or may not still contain the original contents), illegal poll closings, deceptively designed ballots, unannounced poll relocations, voter intimidation by the police, unexplained removal of names from voter registration lists, and widespread reports of ballot tampering.

Exactly how many voting 'improprieties' need to be reported, and how many members of the Bush family need to be directly implicated, before the word 'fraud' enters the media's lexicon? To understand just how thoroughly corrupt and co-opted the media is, a story from the *New York Daily News* that ran just before the election is instructive.

Revealed there is the strategy that was being prepared by the Bush team to employ in the event that Bush had taken the popular vote but lost the Electoral College vote - the opposite of the current alleged outcome. The team had prepared 'talking points' on the unfairness of the Electoral College system and planned a massive media assault, fueled by right-wing talk radio demagogues.

The idea was to spark a popular revolt against the College as an institution that was thwarting the free will of the people. The team had intended to enlist Democrats to join in the bipartisan propaganda campaign. Strangely enough, with Bush now the presumed winner, neither political party - nor the media - seems to really give a shit about the will of the people. Strange how that works.

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The Unelectable Son, Part III

Dave McGowan
November 28, 2000

"Group hypnotism, mob leadership, call it what you will, was never more easy than in this day of syndicated press and national hookup. And democracy may find this new world an even more unhealthy place in which to survive than it has been for the last one hundred years."

CIA asset George "Esty" Estabrooks in *Hypnotism*, 1943

On November 26th, James Baker III stood before the television cameras and said: "it is time to honor the will of the people." Well, hallelujah! Finally, a voice of sanity somewhere in the vast wasteland of the American media. At long last, someone with the courage and integrity and basic human decency to stand before the nation and offer a voice of reason.

But wait! It turns out that it was some kind of sick joke. Jimbo was just pulling our leg. What he really wanted was for the will of the people to be flagrantly ignored by granting the presidency to George W. Bush. For if the will of the people were truly respected by the likes of Baker, he would have advised his candidate to step aside long ago.

The will of the people was, without question, that Al Gore should serve as our next president. This is an indisputable fact that cannot be denied and will not go away, no matter how much propaganda is foisted on the American people by the Washington crowd and their fully-owned media subsidiaries.

This is true even if we give the Bush team every possible benefit of the doubt - even if we assume that there was no deliberate fraud in the state of Florida, that the results certified by Katherine "what cabinet post am I getting?" Harris are accurate, and that every qualified ballot cast has been accurately counted and recorded.

Consider the fact that Gore finished with a small, though unmistakable margin of victory in the national popular vote tally, roughly three times Kennedy's margin of victory in the frequently referenced 1960 election. Clearly then, in terms of the popular vote, the will of the people favored a Gore presidency. Of course, in a real democracy, that would be enough to decide the election.

We all know, however, that this is not a real democracy, so mysterious and wise 'electors' - who know far better than we what is best for us - are selected to decide who our president should be. And this, according to the media and the Washington establishment, is a good thing. Why, it's the way we've always done things, and everyone knows that this is the greatest damned democracy in the world.

But, you ask, isn't the Electoral College an archaic, undemocratic institution? That may

be so, they say, but those are the rules that we've always played by and we can't go changing them now. But why, you ask, if we call ourselves a democracy - if we in fact hold ourselves up to the world as an *ideal democracy* - would we not rid ourselves of an undemocratic 'aberration'?

We can't do that, they say, because it's unfair to change the rules just because you don't like the outcome. But, you ask, if it's truly democracy that we aspire to, isn't it our *duty* to change the rules if those rules support an undemocratic outcome? No, they say, the rules must be followed. But, you ask, by saying that the rules are more important than the actual exercise of democracy, aren't you acknowledging that you are a fascist? And they say nothing.

For the sake of argument, though, we will continue to give Bush the benefit of the doubt and entertain the ludicrous fantasy that the Electoral College has a legitimate place in a democracy. What then does the College have to say? Prior to the certification of Florida's votes, Gore held 267 electoral votes out of a possible 538. If you do the math, you'll find that *even without Florida*, Gore was less than 1/2 of 1 percent shy of the electoral majority needed to win.

Even so, 'close' doesn't count, and Florida's electoral votes give Bush a small margin of victory in the Electoral College. There is a catch, though: the improbably narrow margin of victory in the Florida popular vote that gives him the infinitesimal lead in electoral votes is dependent upon several thousand ballots being miscast.

As previously stated, we are giving Bush every benefit of the doubt with regards to voter fraud. What is not in doubt though is that a good number of elderly voters - some of them survivors of the Nazi holocaust - cast their ballots for Hitler apologist Pat Buchanan, which many 'conservatives' seem to find gut-bustingly funny. Even assuming that this was just an honest mistake, the fact remains that the intent of these voters was, by *all accounts*, to cast their ballots for Al Gore.

And the plain fact is that those votes, had they been properly cast, would have given the state to Gore, even before any of the recounts adjusted the supposed margin of victory. The simple truth, then, is that the *intent* of the voters in Florida, and therefore the *will* of the people of that state, was that Gore should accede to the throne.

Even the most die-hard of Bush flacks cannot deny this fact, though the conscienceless Baker turned it on its head in an absolutely craven attempt to justify the spectacle of an arrogant and shameless little man delivering an ersatz acceptance speech after losing the popular vote and achieving the narrowest of electoral victories based on what can - *in the most charitable light* - best be described as a mistake.

What sort of character must a man possess to pompously propel himself to power under such conditions? What kind of man would so presumptuously declare himself the winner with a paper-thin victory based on an admitted mistake, and feel no shame in doing so? And what sort of media would be a party to such a brazen disregard for the will of the people, the same people that candidate Bush claimed to trust?

The most inflammatory and disinformational coverage of this election fiasco has come from, not surprisingly, the foaming-at-the-mouth denizens of talk radio - the mouthpieces of the ultra-right. But can we really expect anything more from the likes of Rush Limbaugh, whose lies are so transparent that he deliberately and consciously avoids any situation where he might have to actually defend his views?

The Limbaugh clones are not alone, however. Coverage from the cable news networks has been only slightly less inflammatory. This really shouldn't surprise anyone, however, save for those Americans who live in some sort of parallel universe wherein the nation is plagued by a 'liberal' press. To see just how preposterous this belief is, consider who controls the flow of information flooding the cable airwaves.

CNN, the reigning king of the cable titans, is soon to be owned by AOL. A quick peek at the Board of Directors of AOL reveals a rather curious fact: it seems to be heavily populated

by such notorious bleeding-heart liberals as General Alexander Haig and General Colin Powell. CNN is, in other words, closely affiliated with a board that includes the designated Secretary of State of the proposed Bush administration, as well as the man who served as Secretary of State in the Reagan/Bush administration.

It's easy to see, then, how CNN could be guilty of harboring a 'liberal' bias. The same could be said of MSNBC, which is co-owned by Bill Gates, a man who has been at war - by outward appearances anyway - with the Clinton/Gore Justice Department for a number of years now. Then there is the third major cable news entity, Fox News, owned by one of the most openly fascistic players in the business world, Rupert Murdoch.

Assisting Murdoch in putting a 'liberal' slant on this year's election coverage was none other than John Ellis, kissing cousin to George, Jeb (*aka* John Ellis Bush), Marvin and Neil. All three of the cable networks, to put it bluntly, have a vested interest in propelling Bush into power, and none of them can by any stretch of the imagination be considered an objective source of news, 'liberal' or otherwise.

Even these thoroughly corrupt propaganda fronts, though, seemed a bit disturbed when the Bush team sent in a band of hired thugs - taking orders from a mobile command post - to physically disrupt the court-ordered recounting of ballots. Some in the political and media establishment seemed to be a little concerned that deciding an election by threats of mob violence might have been stepping over the line.

Not too concerned though to expose the fact that the grab for power by Sir George is increasingly resembling an unabashedly fascist coup. The print media has been just as shameless as the broadcast media in covering up this fact, and in struggling to legitimize the 'victory' of the Bush team.

The *Los Angeles Times*, long alleged to be a pillar of the 'liberal' media, is fairly typical of the hideously biased print coverage of the fraudulent election. Since election day, two categories of images have dominated the pages of the venerable *Times*.

The first is flattering, presidential looking photos of George Bush, sometimes alone and sometimes accompanied by a much smaller, and generally less flattering, photo of Al Gore. The intent is clearly to psychologically manipulate the people into accepting a Bush presidency, while relegating Gore to also-ran status.

The other dominant image, presented incessantly, is that of bug-eyed and confused looking local officials and precinct workers staring incoherently up at contested ballots as if trying to somehow divine the intentions of voters. The effect is to make a mockery of the hand recounts, despite the fact that hand counting ballots has been the universally accepted method of resolving election disputes for the entire history of this country.

The depths of depravity to which the print and broadcast media are willing to stoop is breathtaking. What though of the 'real' voices of liberalism in this country? What of the so-called alternative media? And what of the 'liberal' and 'progressive' editorialists, columnists and pundits?

Those who have not come out of the fascist closet to endorse an illegitimate presidency have largely remained silent. Some have meekly protested the actions of the Bush operatives, while generally ignoring their more flagrantly undemocratic shenanigans, such as allowing two Republican Party hacks unrestricted and unsupervised access to Republican absentee ballot applications in Seminole County, in flagrant violation of a Florida law drafted specifically to prevent voter fraud.

And where, for that matter, are the country's 'liberal' politicians? Why has Paul Wellstone not denounced the jack-boot tactics of the Bush team? Where are Ted Kennedy, Barney Frank and Tom Harkin? And what of the Great Green One? Why has the self-proclaimed candidate of the people had exactly nothing to say about the thwarting of the will of the people?

The silence of the frauds is truly stunning. Apparently their 'liberal' role-playing does not

include denouncing the wholesale theft of an American presidential election. Such denunciations are best left, apparently, to the wild-eyed conspiracy crowd, even when the evidence is staring them directly in the face.

As for Al Gore and his 'Democratic' cohorts, they continue to walk the tightrope. Their Republican partners-in-crime have placed them in a very difficult position. In order to maintain the legitimacy of the 'Democratic Party,' they must continue to put up a reasonable semblance of a fight.

In order, though, to maintain the legitimacy of the political system as a whole, they must do so without exposing the fundamentally corrupt nature of the Bush grab for power. In that regard, the media will be a trusted ally; for in the final analysis, the media is really serving the interests of 'both' political parties.

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A Supreme Injustice

Dave McGowan
December 4, 2000

Since the 'historic' Supreme Court session held on December 1st was not televised, many of you who didn't have time to plod through the transcript of the 'trial' may have missed out on what transpired. As a public service to those readers, here are some of the highlights of that morning's events. And for those who lack the legal expertise to grasp what was being said, italicized translations accompany all of the excerpted remarks:

Marshal of the court, Dale Bosley: The honorable, the chief justice and the associate justices of the Supreme Court of the United States ... God save the United States and this honorable court.

Bosley: The Supreme Court of the United States, the most openly fascistic entity of the U.S. government, is now in session. God save the people of the United States from this dishonorable court, since they don't seem willing or able to save themselves.

Justice John Paul Stevens: Under any circumstances, it was not "must"?

Bush attorney Theodore Olson: Under no circumstances was it "must accept." Now the second--

Stevens: Even an act of God or fraud?

Olson: I don't believe so.

Stevens: Are you actually suggesting, Mr. Olson, that there were absolutely no circumstances under which the secretary of state would have been required, legally and morally, to accept the revised ballot counts?

Olson: That's what we're saying. Now, if I could get on to the next absurd point I wanted to make--

Stevens: Hold on a goddamned minute there, Olson. Are you saying that even if the recounts were correcting massive voter fraud, she still was not required to accept them?

Olson: That's our story, and we're sticking with it.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg: And I do not know of any case where we have impugned a state supreme court the way you are doing in this case.

Ginsburg: Olson, you fascist piece of shit. Do you have no shame at all, bringing this dung heap of a case before this court? And does your shrill-voiced hag of a wife have no shame either? If I have to see her spouting fascist propaganda on the cable airwaves one more time, I think I'm going to puke. And by the way, what do you think of a 'news' channel, such as

MSNBC, parading her sorry ass out on a daily basis to comment on the impeachment marathon, without ever once identifying her as a major player, along with yourself, in that whole sordid affair?

Olson: I'd like to finish that one point, that the Florida Supreme Court said, "We are not going to be bound by technical statutory requirements," or what the supreme court called hyper-technical statutory requirements. "Instead, we are going to resort to the will of the people, the will of the electorate, the will of the voters," so to speak ...

Olson: The main point that we're arguing here is that the Florida Supreme Court had the gall to actually render a decision that attempted to honor the will of the people, as though they thought this was some sort of democracy we're trying to run here. I can't imagine what the hell they were thinking ...

Justice Clarence Thomas:

Thomas: (I don't know why I have to be here listening to this shit. I have no idea what the fuck these people are talking about. I hope Rehnquist and Scalia are going to explain all this shit to me later.)

Olson: And what the court was bound and determined to do was to get to a consequence that the court determined was consistent with the will of the people, irrespective of what the statute said.

Olson: Like I was saying, the Florida court insisted on issuing a ruling consistent with democratic rights, something that I, and I'm sure many of you fascists on the bench, find offensive and completely contradictory to the 'rule of law.'

Justice Sandra Day O'Connor: And are you relying in that regard on Title II - I mean, would you like to - Article II - would you like to characterize the federal issue--

Olson: Well--

O'Connor: Did you ever see those old "Saturday Night Live" skits where Kevin Nealon - Article II - used to insert subliminal messages - Article II - into his speech? Am I getting through to you, Mr. Olson? Do you understand - hot sex - what I am trying to say?

Olson: Huh?

Justice Stephen Breyer: And therefore, I guess, whether we win - whether your side, the side you're supporting, wins or loses, it doesn't change that.

Breyer: Holy Shit, Olson! Did you just hear that Freudian slip? What I meant to say was that if your side, you know, the side you're on, which doesn't include us here on the bench, who are of course neutral - but if your side wins - that's what I meant to say. It almost sounded like we were on your side, which of course we're not.

O'Connor: I guess Article II permits the legislature, in general, to make the choice it could itself select the electors.

O'Connor: Olson, you're still not getting it, you dumb ass, so here it is plain and simple: Article II basically says "fuck the voters." Why don't you try arguing that?

Justice Antonin Scalia: And that is a real problem, it seems to me, under Article II, because, in fact, there is no right of suffrage under Article II. There's a right of suffrage in voting for the legislature, but Article II makes it very clear that the legislature can, itself, appoint the electors.

Scalia: O'Connor's quite right; I don't know why no one thought of that sooner. Article II

does in fact say that Bush can be installed in power despite losing the vote. The legislature does indeed have the right to say "fuck the voters."

Thomas:

Thomas: (I suppose as the only African American on the bench, and likely in the entire courtroom - unless you count Bob Barr - I should probably say something about the disenfranchisement of tens of thousands of black voters, rather than sitting here mute. Unfortunately, I'm a reprehensible piece of shit who is only concerned with wrapping this up in time to get home and watch "Back Door Girls" one more time before I have to return it.)

Gore attorney Laurence Tribe: The disenfranchising of people, which is what this is all about, disenfranchising people isn't very nice.

Tribe: Saying "fuck the voters," which is the sole basis for the Bush team's abhorrent lawsuit, is a vile, unconscionable act that should be denounced in the harshest possible terms, but I'm such a craven douche bag that all I can come up with is to say that it isn't very nice.

Olson: The second paragraph of the conclusion says, "Because the right to vote is the preeminent right in the declaration of rights of the Florida Constitution" and so forth. The opinion is full of language--

Olson: The Florida court's decision is full of mumbo-jumbo about the people having a right to vote, or some kind of crazy shit like that. Frankly, this document reads like it was written by schoolchildren who had just been brainwashed into believing that they live in a democracy. This decision is a joke--

Olson: I think that the only reasonable, fair reading of the decision is that the Florida Supreme Court felt that - and it says it over and over again - that we are going to attempt to discern the will of the people, the will of the electorate, and discern and enhance in whatever way we possibly can the right to vote.

Olson: I can't remember that Article you guys keep referring to, but like you said, the legislature doesn't have to respect the results of the election anyway. That's where the Florida court really screwed up, because they thought that it was actually important to get an accurate count of the ballots in order to determine the will of the people. But, like you guys keep saying, the legislature can do whatever it damn well pleases, so why all the fuss over getting an accurate count of the ballots? Even if Gore won the election by thousands of votes, as everyone in this room knows he did, who cares? Florida's Secretary of State has already certified our boy as the winner, and the legislature can now select the state's electors. I don't know, to be honest with you, why we even bothered to hold the election in the first place. It seems like a big waste of time and money to me.

On December 4th, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of - big fucking surprise - George W. Bush (five of the nine Injustices were appointed by the Bush and Reagan administrations, and two others by Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford). The blatantly fascistic decision was strangely unsigned, demonstrating that while the court is in fact filled with spawns of Satan, none of them has the integrity to own up to their fascist leanings. A couple of highlights of the decision, with the requisite translations, are reproduced here:

There are expressions in the opinion of the Supreme Court of Florida that may be read to indicate that it construed the Florida Election Code without regard to the extent to which the Florida Constitution could, consistent with Art. II, Sec. 1, cl. 2, "circumscribe the legislative power." The opinion states, for example, that "[t]o the extent that the Legislature may enact

laws regulating the electoral process, those laws are valid only if they impose no 'unreasonable or unnecessary' restraints on the right of suffrage" guaranteed by the state constitution. App. to Pet. for Cert. 30a. The opinion also states that "[b]ecause election laws are intended to facilitate the right of suffrage, such laws must be liberally construed in favor of the citizens' right to vote ..."

We strongly object to the decision rendered by the Florida Supreme Court, in that the lower court based its decision on the misguided notion that the president of the United States should be elected by the people, at least indirectly. The Florida court showed a contempt for the 'rule of law' that is exceeded only by our own complete contempt for the American people, especially all those elderly and minority voters who we didn't expect to turn out to vote on election day. This court wishes to affirm that the Florida Legislature, and, quite frankly, the legislatures of any other states, need not pay any attention to the wishes of the voters ...

Specifically, we are unclear as to the extent to which the Florida Supreme Court saw the Florida Constitution as circumscribing the legislature's authority under Article II, Sec. 1, cl. 2. We are also unclear as to the consideration the Florida Supreme Court accorded to 3 U.S.C. Sec. 5. The judgment of the Supreme Court of Florida is therefore vacated, and the case is remanded for further proceedings not inconsistent with this opinion.

It is so ordered.

Though the attorney for Bush was unable to actually make this argument in court, perhaps not being as openly fascist as those of us on the bench, we have nevertheless ruled in favor of the Bush team based on our own disagreements with the decision of the Florida Supreme Court. This we can do because we are appointed for life and can therefore do any goddamned thing we please. We have no qualms with saying "fuck the voters," because, quite frankly, none of them ever cast a vote for any of us to be sitting up here. We hereby order the Florida Supreme Court to abide by our ruling and to likewise say "fuck the voters."

It is so ordered.

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A Supreme Injustice, Part II

*Dave McGowan
December 12, 2000*

Once again the U.S. Supreme Court, universally hailed by the press and pundits as an unimpeachably honorable body that is above politics, has wallowed into the election muck. And once again the court has opted not to have its proceedings televised, a suitably anti-democratic stance for the reactionary court. So once again, as a public service to readers, here are some of the highlights of the morning's events. And once again, for those who lack the legal expertise to grasp what was being said, italicized translations accompany all of the excerpted remarks:

Bush attorney Theodore Olson: All of the limitations on the remand process that existed during the protest phase, where the standard should be lower because it's earlier in the process, are thrown out the window. The timetables are thrown out the window. The process that exists are there ...

Justice David Souter: What's the timetable in 168?

Olson: There's no timetable ...

Souter: That's right, there is no timetable there, so that seems to undercut your timetable argument once you get into the contest phase from the protest phase.

Olson: Since our strategy primarily involves stalling the accurate counting of votes until we can run out the clock, we object to the fact that we can't artificially impose deadlines ...

Souter: What are the deadlines imposed under the Florida statute covering the contesting of certified election results?

Olson: Well, all the propaganda put out by our side to the contrary, there actually aren't any ...

Souter: No shit, Sherlock. Now, do you have any valid arguments to make?

Olson: It is, we submit, an utter revision of the timetables, the allocation of ...

Souter: But, Mr. Olson, we're back to the--there is no timetable in 166.

Olson: That's correct.

Olson: As I was saying earlier, they're trying to change the deadlines ...

Souter: Yo, Olson! Didn't we just cover that a few minutes ago? Read my lips, "There are no fucking deadlines."

Olson: I didn't know you were still here.

Souter: Well, if your concern was with impossibility, why didn't you let the process run instead of asking for a stay?

Olson: Well, because we said ...

Souter: You'd find out.

Olson: Because we argued, and I believe, that there's a very firm basis that that process already had violated Article II of the Constitution. It was also already throwing in jeopardy compliance with Section 5 of Title 3 because the laws had been changed in a number of different respects and we've recited them. The timetables are important.

Justice Anthony Kennedy: I thought your point was that the process is being conducted in violation of the equal protection clause because its standardless.

Olson: And the due process clause. And what we know is now the new system that was set forth and articulated last ...

Souter: If reaching an outcome before a supposed deadline was your chief concern, why did you deliberately delay the proceedings by seeking to stop the vote counting?

Olson: Uhhmm ...

Souter: What's wrong with counting the votes?

Olson: Because the count was being conducted illegally in that Gore was quickly wiping away our bullshit, paper-thin margin of victory. And also because of Article II and Section 5 of Title 3 and subsection C of Section 6 of the Magna Carta and something else that I saw the other day on Judge Wapner's Peoples' Court. And also (is that bastard Souter still here?) because of the deadlines that don't actually exist.

Kennedy: What the hell are you talking about? Do you have a coherent argument?

Olson: Not really. I'm just throwing out every half-baked legal argument I can think of. You guys just pick out the one that you like the best.

Justice Clarence Thomas:

Thomas: (I wonder how much it cost Michael Jackson to bleach his whole body like that. I'm going to have to look into that.)

Justice Stephen Breyer: [I]f it were to start up again, if it were--totally hypothetically--and you were counting just undercounts, I understand that you think that the system that's set up now is very unfair, because it's different standards in different places. But what in your opinion would be a fair standard, on the assumption that it starts up missing the 12th deadline but before the 18th?

Olson: Well, one fair standard--and I don't know the complete answer to that, is that there would be a uniform way of evaluating the manner in which--there's Palm Beach, for example ...

Breyer: If we were running a real democracy here, and I know that that is a purely hypothetical situation, what would be a fair standard to uniformly apply in hand counting ballots?

Olson: For a uniform standard to apply, it must be uniform.

Breyer: No, I'd still like to get your view as to what would be the fair standard.

Olson: Well, certainly one that would--I don't--I haven't crafted it entirely out. That is the job for a legislature.

Breyer: But I'd still like to get your opinion insofar as you could give it.

Olson: I think that part of the standard is that it would have to be applied uniformly.

Breyer: Hey, Einstein! I know that a uniformly applied standard must be uniformly applied. What I'm asking you is what that uniform standard should be.

Olson: We would really prefer that the votes not be counted at all.

Breyer: But if they were, what kind of standard should apply.

Olson: A uniform standard should be uniform.

Souter: OK, but we have--there's no question that the closest we can come now, under Florida law, is an intent of the voter standard. Is it your position that if any official, judicial or executive, at this point were to purport to lay down a statewide standard, which went to a lower level, a more specific level than intent of the voter, and said, for example, "Count dimpled chads," or "Don't count dimpled chads," in your judgment would that be a violation of Article II?

Olson: I don't think it would be a violation of Article II, provided that--I mean, the first part of your question ...

Souter: All right. So if we went from the standard that existed before, the dimpled chads that hadn't--that had not been a standard anywhere in Florida, if that change was made, we would strongly urge that that would be a violation of Article II, a complete change ...

Justice Antonin Scalia: Mr. Olson, it is also part of your case, is it not, that insofar as that language just quoted is concerned, the power of the circuit judge to prevent or correct any alleged wrong? It's part of your submission, I think, that there is no wrong when a machine does not count those ballots that it's not supposed to count.

Olson: That's absolutely correct, Justice Scalia. It would ...

Scalia: The voters who detach the chads entirely, and the machine as predicted does not count those chads, where those instructions are not followed, there isn't any wrong.

Olson: That's correct. This has been euphemistically referred to as legal votes that haven't been counted.

Souter: Now let me see if I've got this straight, Olson. You're saying that the Florida law, which specifies that the 'intent of the voter' shall be ascertained, is too vague to serve as a guideline for counting votes. And you're also saying that any attempt to more clearly define what is meant by 'intent of the voter' constitutes changing the laws after the election. So what you're really saying is that there is no valid way to count the votes in the state of Florida, and so the very act of counting the ballots is unconstitutional.

Olson: Well, that's not exactly what I'm saying, but kind of ...

Souter: Let me attempt to rephrase that before Scalia cuts me off ...

Scalia: Olson, these guys are kicking your ass! Let me get you off the hook here. Isn't it true that the ballots that haven't been counted yet were cast by people that are too stupid to vote?

Olson: Exactly! Finally, someone who gets it ...

Scalia: Is it not the voter's fault if the machines fail to punch the ballots correctly and completely, especially if the voters are Democrats?

Olson: Of course it is. And surely no one thinks that stupid people should decide this election, unless they happen to be wearing judicial robes.

Olson: Many people do not vote in the presidential election, even those that are voting for other offices.

Souter: But as to the undervotes, and as to the undervotes in which there is arguably some expression of intent on the ballot that the machine didn't pick up, the majority of the Florida Supreme Court says you're wrong. They interpreted the statute otherwise. Are you saying here that their interpretation was so far unreasonable in defining legal votes as not to be a judicial act entitled, in effect, to the presumption of reasonable interpretation under Article II?

Olson: Yes, that is our contention.

Olson: The truth is that all of the voters whose ballots were not counted failed to make a selection for president.

Souter: Are you saying that none of those tens of thousands of ballots contain a clear choice for president?

Olson: Well, we haven't actually looked at them, or allowed anyone else to look at them, but that's the story we're trying to sell.

Breyer: And the question on Florida law is simply this, what the statute as I take it, the contest statute, lists grounds for contesting. One of those grounds is rejecting a sufficient number of legal votes, sufficient to place the election in doubt. And then the circuit judge is given the power to investigate that allegation, just to look into it.

Bush attorney Joseph Klock: Yes.

Breyer: So why would it be illegal under Florida law to have a recount just to investigate whether this allegation is or is not so?

Klock: The justice's question assumes that they are legal votes.

Breyer: There might be some in there that are legal under anybody's standard.

Klock: You honor, if they are not properly--if the ballot is not properly executed, it's not a legal vote.

Breyer: Is it not standard procedure in a contested election for the judiciary to investigate claims that legally cast ballots were excluded from the count? How else are we to determine if the claims are valid?

Klock: Well, I suppose so, if you're going to insist on fairness.

Breyer: So why would you characterize as illegal the actions of the Florida Supreme Court in ordering an examination and recount of those ballots?

Klock: The justice's question assumes that they are legal votes.

Breyer: Actually, my question assumed that the votes need to be examined before it can be determined if they are in fact legal votes. Jesus, you people are un-fucking-believable.

Klock: Well, we already know they are illegal.

Justice John Paul Stevens: [W]ould it not make sense to assume that the standard you use for damaged ballots would be the same standard you use in that situation?

Klock: I don't think so, sir.

Stevens: What standard would you use ...

Klock: Well ...

Stevens: ... in the situation I proposed then?

Klock: Justice Brennan, the difficulty is that under--I'm sorry.

Stevens: Now Mr. Klock, damaged ballots are counted, are they not? Can we not use the same standard for hand counting the undervotes that we use to hand count damaged ballots?

Klock: I must reiterate here that our position is that there are no circumstances under which those votes should be counted, or even looked at. As far as we're concerned, they don't exist.

Stevens: But if they did, what standard would you use to count undervotes ...

Klock: What undervotes?

Stevens: The ones we've been discussing here.

Klock: Oh shit. I thought I was talking to that dead guy who stepped down from the bench a decade ago. Can we start over?

Scalia: But what the Florida Supreme Court said is that there shall be added to the certification these additional numbers.

Gore attorney David Boies: But that's true in any contest. Every single contest ...

Scalia: It's not added to the certification.

Boies: Yes, of course it is, your honor.

Scalia: You may do a review of the ballots and add more numbers, but as I read the Florida Supreme Court opinion, it said the secretary of state will certify these additional ...

Boies: Yes, because the contest procedure is a procedure to contest the certification.

Scalia: The certification, as rendered by the secretary of state, did not include those additional ballots for your client, and the Supreme Court directed that the certification would be changed to include those.

Boies: But, your honor, that is what happens every time there is a successful contest. The

contest is a contest of the certification. You have the certification results ...

Thomas:

Scalia: It doesn't make any sense to me.

Scalia: The Florida Supreme Court had the nerve to order that additional legally cast and counted votes be added to Al Gore's certified vote tally. What's up with that?

Boies: The original certification was bogus, and we successfully contested it in court. The legal remedy was to adjust the certified vote totals to more accurately reflect the results of the election. That's pretty much standard procedure in a contest ...

Scalia: They can change the certification?

Boies: Duh.

Scalia: You mean they can overrule Katherine Harris?

Boies: Duh.

Scalia: But they changed the bogus numbers that Harris had already certified.

Boies: Duh.

Thomas: (Even I understand what he's saying. I thought Scalia was supposed to be the smart one.)

Scalia: You Democrats speak in tongues.

Breyer: They gave an example. The example they gave in their brief was, there's a punch for Governor Bush and there's a punch for "write-in" and the write-in says, "I want Governor Bush." And so I think their implication is that that would have been rejected by the machine, but if you looked at it by hand, the intent of the voter would be clear. I don't know if there are such votes, but they say there might be.

Boies: There's nothing in the record that suggests there are such votes.

Breyer: The Bush team has yet another argument, and it's a real doozy. They're saying that if we hand count the undervotes, we also have to hand count all the overvotes. We all know that they actually don't want to count any of the votes and are just trying to make the recounting task as odious as possible, but they're arguing that some of the overvotes might be multiple votes for Bush. Some people may have crossed all the other names off the ballot, wrote in Bush for all of them, and punched all the chads. They're saying there could be thousands of such ballots.

Boies: And you're buying that? I give up. I'm outta here.

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A Supreme Injustice, Part III

Dave McGowan
December 13, 2000

"The Supreme Court's 5-4 decision to stay all further recounts is nothing short of a judicial coup d'etat."

Loyola Law School professor Theodore P. Seto

The verdict, as they say, is in. The highest court in the land, the ultimate arbiter of the 'rule of law,' has spoken. And in a decision that should have come as a shock only to those who foolishly believe that the U.S. Supreme Court adheres to some kind of lofty legal principles, the unelectable son was essentially appointed as the next president of these United States.

The opinion of the court, which was written and released in a manner which was obviously intended to conceal the fact that the decision was concurred with by the narrowest of majorities, was released just after 10:00 PM on Tuesday night. Though cloaked in pseudo-legal jargon, the majority opinion is clearly not based on any known legal principles, and certainly not the principles the Court has touted in the past.

A thoughtful reading of the decision leads one to the inescapable conclusion that the Justices were desperately seeking any flimsy pretext with which to justify what was obviously a pre-ordained verdict. The document is, to put it bluntly, built on a bed of lies and constructed of the most transparently fraudulent legal arguments imaginable.

The stench emanating from the pen of Chief Justice William Rehnquist, the presumed author of the unsigned majority opinion, was so extreme that all four of the dissenting Justices took the highly unusual step of issuing their own separate dissents, to be sure that their legal and moral outrage was clearly expressed. It should be noted here that two of those four were appointed by conservative Republican presidents, and can hardly be considered 'liberals.'

In fact, persistent press reports to the contrary, there are no actual liberals on the U.S. Supreme Court. They are all 'conservatives.' Of course, alongside such overt fascists as Rehnquist and Scalia, some of them appear to have 'liberal' leanings, just as Bill Press and Paul Begala appear to be liberal when paired with the likes of Pat Buchanan and Oliver North on the cable 'news' talkathons. How liberal do you really have to be though to stand to the left of Atilla the Hun?

Of the nine, the most reactionary of the bunch are Rehnquist, Antonin Scalia, and their silent partner-in-crime, Clarence Thomas. Only slightly less fascistic are Sandra Day O'Connor and Anthony Kennedy. These are, naturally enough, the five who issued the majority opinion, as well as the five who ordered the blatantly illegal and patently hypocritical stay of the recount order.

Of these five Justices who would dare to appoint our next president, at least four of them

are seriously compromised. It has been reported that two of Justice Scalia's sons are attorneys working for the formidable Bush legal team, one of them a partner of the reprehensible Ted Olson. It has also been reported that Justice Thomas' wife has been working on the prematurely formed Bush transition team, screening applicants for positions within the illegitimate administration.

That fountain of leftist propaganda, *The Wall Street Journal*, has reported that Rehnquist was strongly bucking for a new Bush administration as well. It seems that the Chief Justice would like to step down, but will do so only with the certainty that his replacement will be suitably reactionary (come to think of it, if a Bush Administration is what it will take to rid the country of the aging fascist, maybe it wouldn't be such a bad thing after all).

The *Journal* also reports that O'Connor would like to either step down herself, or perhaps step up to fill Rehnquist's slot, either of which would be premised on a Bush presidency. It's hardly surprising then that these four, joined by Kennedy, issued an opinion designed to bypass the will of the people and install Bush in the White House.

It's not even surprising that the triumvirate of evil - Rehnquist, Scalia and the seemingly mindless (in a very literal sense) Thomas - issued a separate concurring opinion that expresses the belief of the fascist power trio that the majority opinion did not go far enough in ruling in Bush's favor. What is surprising, however, is that the fraudulence of the majority's opinion is so blatant that the remaining four Justices were moved to issue devastating attacks on the decision and its authors, particularly ringleader Rehnquist.

And deservedly so. The majority opinion expresses in no uncertain terms the Court's contempt for the American people: "The individual citizen has no federal constitutional right to vote for electors for the President of the United States," unless granted that right by the state legislature. Even then, according to the Court, the State "can take back the power to appoint electors ... at any time." In other words, if you don't vote the way the State wants you to, you can simply be overruled.

Furthermore, says the court, "the recount cannot be conducted in compliance with the requirements of equal protection and due process without substantial additional work." It would just be too hard, the Court seems to be saying, to accurately count the votes of the people. And why bother? The people don't have a right to vote anyway (and certainly have no right to vote for Supreme Court Justices).

For these reasons, the Court ordered that "the judgment of the Supreme Court of Florida is reversed, and this case is remanded for further proceedings not inconsistent with this opinion." The cynical author fails to note, of course, that the opinion is structured to deliberately preclude any further proceedings.

Justice Stevens begins his dissent by stating flatly that there were no substantial federal questions raised in the case. The Supreme Court, in other words, had no business even *hearing* the appeal. Stevens later duly notes that the "intent of the voter" standard is the law of the land in the vast majority of states, has been for decades, and has never been challenged before this election.

Later still, he directly attacks the fundamentally anti-democratic and hypocritical nature of the majority ruling: "As the majority explicitly holds, once a state legislature determines to select electors through a popular vote, the right to have one's vote counted is of constitutional stature. As the majority further acknowledges, Florida law holds that all ballots that reveal the intent of the voter constitute valid votes. Recognizing these principles, the majority nonetheless orders the termination of the contest proceeding before all such votes have been tabulated ... the majority effectively orders the disenfranchisement of an unknown number of voters whose ballots reveal their intent - and are therefore legal votes under state law - but were for some reason rejected by ballot-counting machines."

Saving the best for last, Stevens closes his dissent with the already infamous: "Although we may never know with complete certainty the identity of the winner of this year's

presidential election, the identity of the loser is perfectly clear. It is the Nation's confidence in the judge as an impartial guardian of the rule of law."

Justice Souter begins his dissent by directly stating that the Supreme Court had no business hearing either of the appeals of the Florida Supreme Court rulings, and certainly had no business staying the recount order. Having accepted the case, though, "its resolution by the majority is another erroneous decision."

Souter next notes that, while he is in substantial agreement with the other dissenting Justices, he "write(s) separately only to say how straightforward the issues before us really are." In other words, this was not some complex case where legitimate differences of opinion should exist. This was a very clear-cut case, providing *no* justification for the opinion issued by the majority.

The Justice concludes his dissent by noting that fact: "the statewide total of undervotes is about 60,000. To recount these manually would be a tall order, but before this Court stayed the effort to do that the courts of Florida were ready to do their best to get that job done. There is no justification for denying the State the opportunity to try to count all disputed ballots now."

Justice Ginsburg's dissent notes that there is "no cause to upset [the Florida Supreme Court's] reasoned interpretation of Florida law." She also notes that on only three prior occasions in U.S. history has the Supreme Court "rejected outright an interpretation of state law by a state high court." Directly confronting the hypocrisy and complete lack of integrity by the majority (who piously claim to support states' rights), she writes that:

"Were the other members of this Court as mindful as they generally are of our system of dual sovereignty, they would affirm the judgment of the Florida Supreme Court." She further notes that "the Court's conclusion that a constitutionally adequate recount is impractical is a prophecy the Court's own judgment will not allow to be tested. Such an untested prophecy should not decide the Presidency of the United States."

In what could be a telling detail, Justice Ginsburg closes her dissenting opinion with the words: "I dissent." Those who are familiar with the workings of the Supreme Court know that the traditional sign-off for such an opinion is "I respectfully dissent," which was used by the other three dissenting Justices. By flaunting tradition, Ginsburg appears to be signaling, and not too subtly, that she is particularly appalled by the actions of the Court.

The longest and most blistering dissent was written by Justice Breyer. It begins: "The Court was wrong to take this case. It was wrong to grant a stay. It should now vacate that stay and permit the Florida Supreme Court to decide whether the recount should resume." With that, the Justice is just getting started.

He later writes that: "there is no justification for the majority's remedy, which is simply to reverse the lower court and halt the recount entirely," and notes also that: "the majority's reasoning would seem to invalidate any state provision for a manual recount of individual counties in a statewide election."

Still further on, he writes that: "The majority justifies stopping the recount entirely on the ground that there is no more time," while duly noting that: "the majority reaches this conclusion in the absence of *any* record evidence that the recount could not have been completed in the time allowed by the Florida Supreme Court."

Questioning Rehnquist's supposed commitment to states' rights, Breyer writes: "I cannot agree that the Chief Justice's unusual review of state law in this case is justified ... Moreover, even were such review proper, the conclusion that the Florida Supreme Court's decision contravenes federal law is untenable."

Defending the decisions of the Florida Supreme Court, he notes: "Since only a few hundred votes separated the candidates, and since the 'undercounted' ballots numbered tens of thousands, it is difficult to see how anyone could find this conclusion unreasonable - however strict the standard used to measure the voter's 'clear intent'."

In conclusion, Breyer echoes the warnings of Justice Stevens: "But we do risk a self-inflicted wound - a wound that may harm not just the Court, but the Nation ... What it does today, the Court should have left undone. I would repair the damage done as best we now can, by permitting the Florida recount to continue under uniform standards."

As previously noted, Rehnquist, Scalia and Thomas submitted an additional concurring opinion, which appears to be the decision that the trio first tried to sell to the other Justices as a proposed majority opinion. It explicitly reiterates the notion that the people have no right to vote. It also notes that "Florida statutory law cannot reasonably be thought to *require* the counting of improperly marked ballots," a rather remarkable statement.

The most memorable passage claims that: "the Supreme Court of Florida ordered recounts of tens of thousands of so-called 'undervotes' spread through 64 of the State's 67 counties. This was done in a search for elusive - perhaps delusive - certainty as to the exact count of 6 million votes. But no one claims that these ballots have not previously been tabulated; they were initially read by voting machines at the time of the election, and thereafter reread by virtue of Florida's automatic recount provision. No one claims there was any fraud in this election."

This is an absolutely stunning collection of lies and distortions. The plain and simple fact is that the Justices, and everybody else involved with the case, are fully aware that the "so-called" undervotes have *never* been counted. That is an indisputable fact. And while it may be true that the media and Washington have bent over backwards to avoid making any claims of fraud, a broad spectrum of the American people know better.

As I was finishing up this article, the surreal spectacle of a smiling Al Gore delivering his 'concession' speech began. Not surprisingly, Big Al made every conceivable effort to legitimize the U.S. political system and the presidency of George Bush, cloaking his entire speech in God, Democracy and Country, as though what has occurred in the last five weeks has anything to do with God or democracy.

Following closely on the heels of the pathetic performance by Gore was George W. himself, our new duly appointed head-of-state. Bush wanted to make sure we all knew that he "was not elected to serve one party, but to serve one nation." That's funny, because the last time I checked, he hadn't been *elected* to serve jack-shit.

Postscript: The day after Bush officially became the president-elect, he and his wife attended a private service at the Tarrytown United Methodist Church in Austin, Texas, along with a few hundred friends and staffers. During the sermon, the Reverend Mark Craig told Bush that: "You have been chosen by God to lead the people." Prior to hearing this, I had assumed that William Rehnquist only thought he was God. My bad.

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America Under a Bush

Dave McGowan
December 2000

Press reports are rife with speculation over what the country can expect from its newly appointed president-elect. Will George, Jr.'s administration mirror that of his father? He does, after all, look and sound just like his pop would if George, Sr. were able to shed about 25 years and roughly the same number of IQ points (and Big George himself was not, it will be recalled, the brightest bulb on the Christmas tree).

Will Bush be weakened by the perceived illegitimacy of his presidency? Will he be stymied by an evenly divided Congress? Will he be able to reach across the aisle to forge a bipartisan consensus? Will he be able to heal the wounds of a fractured nation? Yadda, yadda, yadda.

Despite all the hand wringing by the press and pundits over the obstacles facing the incoming administration, it seems pretty clear that the Bush team has been emboldened by its broad-daylight theft of the election, and by the relative passivity of the American people, and will very likely move quickly and decisively to promote an exceedingly reactionary agenda.

So what specifically should we expect in the coming days and years? What does Team Bush have in store for us? The good news is that Bush's policies won't likely differ dramatically from the policies of Clinton. The bad news is that Clinton's policies basically sucked. Spinning by the press and punditocracy to the contrary, Clinton advanced one of the most reactionary agendas of any U.S. president in modern times.

One of the first things we should look for is that the shortened transition period will be crassly exploited to ram through a number of questionable cabinet appointments, who will of course be perfunctorily confirmed, in the spirit of bipartisanship, by the hideously corrupt United States Congress. These appointments will receive, of course, considerably less press coverage than the early 'diverse' appointments.

Expect also to see Little George reach out to Congressional Democrats, particularly Senators, when passing out Cabinet posts. Besides the all-important illusion of seeking conciliation by 'reaching across the aisle,' which the press just loves to talk about, a much more important purpose is served by doing so: all Democrats siphoned off of Congress can be replaced with Republicans.

By doing so, the Republicans can regain their slim majority hold on both houses, which was largely stripped away by the election. But wait a minute, you say. Wouldn't that be sort of like changing the *rules* after the election, which the Supreme Court just said was a no-no. To the contrary, it would be more like changing the *outcome* of a popular election, which the Court just said was perfectly fine.

The point is that the composition of the Congress can, and likely will, be changed to

some degree through Cabinet appointments. The obvious advantage for the Bush team is that a Republican controlled Congress will facilitate the advancement of the Bush agenda ... though this is not to naively suggest that Congressional Democrats would likely have stood in the way.

It will, however, be easier for the press to justify in the court of public opinion the craven complicity of Congress in green-lighting every reactionary proposal to emerge from the Bush White House. Having filled that house with fraudulent Democrats and overt fascists (and the basement, perhaps, with Ollie North and Co.), the Bush team will be ready to go to work.

Shortly into the new administration, expect a fire to be staged in the Reichstag, providing the pretext to dissolve Congress and usurp legislative powers Oh, wait a minute ... I was thinking of another head of state that 'legally' assumed power. Never mind.

Instead, expect Bush's much ballyhooed tax 'reform' to be prominent on the agenda. Don't worry though; it won't have any effect on you. Capital gains and inheritance taxes will undoubtedly be slashed dramatically, perhaps even eliminated entirely. Income taxes may be lowered as well, though primarily for corporations and those with stratospheric incomes. Some savings might even trickle down to you, but don't count on it.

Expect also a stepped-up 'war on terrorism.' What this really means, of course, is an increased attack on the human and civil rights of Americans. We will naturally be told that our lawmakers are striking a balance between the rights of American citizens, and the need to guard against the nonexistent threat of international and domestic terrorism. In the name of protecting us, a wholesale attack on our few remaining democratic rights will be launched.

This is the kind of program that, we will be assured by the press, enjoys broad bipartisan support. Another bipartisan favorite we are likely to see is a new omnibus crime bill. More police, better equipped police, more prisons, more liberal use of the death penalty, restrictions on appeals, more behaviors criminalized, greater cooperation between federal, state and local law enforcement agencies: all of this and more is necessary if we're to get serious about being 'tough on crime.'

Two buzz words to be on the lookout for from Team Bush are 'privatization' and 'deregulation.' For the Bushwhackers, the more of both, the better. Schools, healthcare facilities and prisons are prime candidates for privatization, along with, of course, Social Security and Medicare. Deregulation could strike anywhere, at any time, touted as a way to lower consumer costs by increasing competition. Expect sudden and drastic price increases to follow any act of deregulation.

In the field of foreign policy, look for an increasingly belligerent attitude towards Poppy Bush's old buddy, Saddam Hussein. Never mind that the belligerent attitudes of the two previous administrations have cost as many as two million Iraqis their lives, as a result of the U.S.-imposed sanctions, the still frequent bombings, and the lingering environmental damage caused by the extensive use of radioactive depleted uranium.

It's time now to really get tough with Iraq. Tough enough, perhaps, to take modern warfare into the nuclear era. We may be witness to the world's first deployment of a 'tactical' nuclear weapon. **This would most likely occur under the pretense of destroying alleged Iraqi underground nuclear/biowarfare facilities.**

In other words, we may deploy *our* weapons of mass destruction in order to destroy *their* weapons of mass destruction. What could possibly be wrong with that? After all, everyone knows that *they're* fucking crazy. And who would question the motives of such great Americans as Colin Powell directing and approving such an action?

Elsewhere on the foreign relations front, expect a new mission for our men and women in uniform. Lots of money needs to be funneled into the pockets of Bush, Cheney and Baker's buddies in the 'defense' industry. The best way to do that, of course, is to find some place to dump our existing stockpiles of bombs and missiles.

It's also necessary to repeatedly remind all those 'rogue' nations out there that we are serious about imposing U.S.-approved markets on every corner of the globe. Opposition to manipulation and exploitation by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization has been known to bring on a case of Sudden Aerial Bombardment Syndrome.

Another thing we can expect from the Bush team (and this one is, I think, my personal favorite) is a couple of reactionary Supreme Court appointments. You remember the Supreme Court, don't you? That was the branch of government that appointed Little George to the presidency.

That is, you see, how a 'democracy' works. The Supreme Court appoints the President, and the President in turn appoints the Supreme Court. I think that's what they call the 'separation of powers,' or the 'system of checks and balances,' or something like that. And while we're on the subject of the high court, expect them to immediately resume issuing decisions supportive of 'states' rights,' and to begin once again routinely turning away cases dealing with 'equal protection.'

On the brighter side, one thing we shouldn't expect from the Bush team is a repeal of abortion rights. Contrary to their carefully crafted images, the Bush family, and any number of other 'conservatives' in Washington, aren't really opposed to the practice of abortion. They just pretend that they are to insure the support of the Abortion Clinic Bombers lobby.

The truth is that the majority of women seeking abortions are, and always have been, from the lower echelons of society. Minorities and women from the lower socio-economic classes are grossly over-represented. The rather harsh reality is that, from the point of view of Team Bush, the less 'those people' reproduce, the better off we'll be.

The 'conservative' majority on the Supreme Court has had it within its power to revoke abortion rights for quite some time. It hasn't chosen to do so yet, and isn't likely to in the near future, even with an increased majority. The Court's Justices have, if nothing else, proven themselves quite capable of disregarding their own precedents and abandoning their supposedly firmly-held Constitutional beliefs.

Presented here have been a few things to watch for in the Age of Bush. But what of that other guy, the one that lost (sort of)? What, in the final analysis, are we to say about Bush's erstwhile opponent? What sort of epitaph are we to write for Al Gore?

This writer, along with the majority of the U.S. press, has not been kind to Al Gore. Some, like myself, have derided him as being virtually indistinguishable from Bush. Others have criticized him for squandering Clinton's supposed legacy. Still others, rather bizarrely, have denounced him as being too 'liberal.'

There seems to be a fairly wide consensus that Gore waged a rather lackluster campaign and a noticeably feeble post-election battle. It occurs to me though that, in a sense, perhaps we have been a bit too harsh in our criticism of Clinton's second fiddle.

It appears, in hindsight, that Gore had a tough job to perform. He had to somehow manage to lose to *George Bush*, after all, without appearing to intentionally do so. And he had to do it while representing an administration widely viewed (though falsely) by the American people as bringing an unprecedented peacetime prosperity upon the nation.

That's a pretty tall order for anyone to fill. The closest comparison I can think of would be for, say, Mike Tyson to take a dive in the ring against Pauly Shore, without appearing to intentionally throw the fight. Put in the same difficult position, do you really think you could have lost any better?

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The Bush Coup in Perspective

Dave McGowan
December 18, 2000

It occurs to me that some writers, myself among them, may have gone just a bit overboard in denouncing the illegitimate power grab by the Bush team. While it was undoubtedly a rather nakedly undemocratic seizure of the presidency, is Bush really the *only* illegitimate president, or even the *most* illegitimate president, in modern American history? Not by a long shot.

And while overriding the will of the people by disenfranchising vast numbers of voters is certainly rather dastardly behavior, I would argue that, on the bright side, nobody got assassinated. It was, in other words, a bloodless coup, which can't be said of several other transfers of power that this country has seen in recent times (here defined as the last 100 years). From the very beginning of the so-called American Century, assassination has played a key role in shaping the presidency.

Teddy Roosevelt was propelled into power in 1901 by the assassination of President William McKinley. McKinley was allegedly shot by anarchist Leon Csolgosz in Buffalo, New York. Two bullets struck the president, one in the abdomen and the other a grazing wound to the ribs. Neither was fatal. Nonetheless, McKinley died eight days later, supposedly as a result of gangrene. If at first you don't succeed ...

Teddy was just beginning to serve his first term as vice-president, having replaced McKinley's previous VP, Garret Hobart. After just six months in office, Roosevelt assumed the presidency. Csolgosz, in that fine tradition of American 'lone nut' assassins, was quickly silenced; within two months, he had been indicted, tried, convicted, sentenced and executed.

Facing election on his own for the first time in 1904, Teddy faced a tough challenge from Mark Hanna, a powerful Republican and the primary political and financial backer of the slain McKinley. Luckily though, Hanna sort of died before the Republican National Convention, so Teddy easily clinched the nomination.

In 1923, Calvin Coolidge was thrust into office by the assassination of President Warren G. Harding. What's that, you say? Didn't Harding die of natural causes? Yeah, right. The official cause of death was listed by White House physician General Sawyer - who was at the President's death bed, along with First Lady 'Duchess' Harding - as an embolism.

This is, of course, the official version of history that we all know and love. There are a couple of problems with the story, however. First of all, the good doctor never performed an autopsy on the body, so how he was able to divine the cause of death of the previously healthy President is anyone's guess.

And the doctor, strangely enough, was similarly struck dead just a year later, while being visited by the only other witness to the president's death, serial poisoner Duchess Harding. According to a report in the *New York Times* at the time, Sawyer's death "was almost identical

with the manner of death of the late Warren G. Harding when General Sawyer was with the President in San Francisco."

In 1945, Harry S Truman assumed the presidency upon the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, which may or may not have been an assassination. Like Teddy Roosevelt, Truman had just taken office after replacing FDR's previous VP, Henry Wallace. Within just 82 days, Truman was president, just in time to negotiate the final 'peace' terms for the post-war world.

It is said that Roosevelt complained of a headache, lost consciousness, and then just died. Whether this was in fact from natural causes is largely a matter of speculation. Roosevelt had obviously felt well enough to begin an unprecedented fourth presidential term, and did not appear publicly to be in poor health. It is now claimed though that he was indeed ailing, and that that fact was concealed from the American people. How much of that is historical revisionism is anyone's guess.

In 1963, Lyndon B. Johnson took office following the assassination of President John Kennedy, which pretty much everyone agrees was definitely an assassination. The only disagreement seems to be over whether it was done by the CIA, the FBI, the KGB, the Mafia, pro-Castro Cubans, anti-Castro Cubans, expatriate Nazis, Woody Harrelson's dad, or - by some of the more dubious theories - some guy named Lee Harvey Oswald.

Alleged assassin Oswald was, as we all remember, indicted, tried, convicted, sentenced and executed in just two days by a tittie bar owner named Jack Ruby who also happened to have connections to the CIA, the FBI, the KGB, the Mafia, pro-Castro Cubans, anti-Castro Cubans, expatriate Nazis, and Woody Harrelson's dad.

Five years later, the assassination of Robert Kennedy was the key factor in the presidential election victory of Richard Nixon. Like Mark Hanna in 1904, Kennedy was much too strong of an opponent. LBJ, knowing that the big boys play hardball, had wisely but unexpectedly chosen not to seek a second elected term of office. Nixon was, therefore, pretty much given a clear playing field.

He was, however, then himself ousted from power in a coup directed from within. Though masquerading as an impeachment proceeding, evidence clearly suggests that what actually occurred was a CIA-directed coup, albeit a bloodless one, kind of like George W's. Also like the current Bush coup, it resulted in an appointed presidency, that of Gerald Ford.

Say what you will of Bush the Younger, at least he actually got out there and ran for the office before being appointed. He even came pretty close to winning. Ford, on the other hand, just stepped right up from Congress, where his primary duty had been to funnel unaccountable funds to the CIA. Come to think of it, Bush's seizure of the White House wasn't even as objectionable as the one his father appears to have attempted in 1981.

For those who have forgotten, that was when a good friend of the Bush family tried to assassinate President Ronald Reagan. Like Teddy Roosevelt and Harry Truman, Bush the Elder had just begun to serve as vice-president, essentially an unelected position. After just ten weeks, Bush came perilously close to seizing the presidency when that crazed 'lone nut,' John Hinckley, Jr., opened fire on Reagan.

I'm sure that the connections between the Bush and Hinckley families are just a coincidence though, just as I'm sure that there's nothing to the initial press report that spoke of a second gunman on an overpass. Assassinations and assassination attempts on political leaders never have any political meaning in this country; they are always the work of those inexplicable 'lone nut' gunmen.

You know, like that lone nut who shot President Lincoln, John Wilkes Booth. The truth though is that Booth was merely the front man for a much wider conspiracy, a fact that was acknowledged at the time. Four additional co-conspirators, in fact, were sent to the gallows for the crime; two others received life sentences. You would be hard-pressed though to ascertain that fact from most of our written and oral histories.

Interestingly enough, Lincoln's successor, Andrew Johnson, had just taken office weeks before the assassination, replacing Lincoln's first VP, Hannibal Hamlin. As previously noted, such an action has been known to seriously shorten the life expectancy of sitting presidents. The 'lone gunman' Booth, by the way, was quickly silenced when he was allegedly killed in the act of taking him into custody.

Looking back at the American Century, it's hard to agree with those who would claim that the current Bush coup d'etat signals the death toll for democracy in this country. The ugly truth is that democracy died long ago, if it ever in fact existed here at all. The Bush 'transition,' in reality, is just business as usual in this great country of ours.

Coups have always been a prominent part of the American political scene. Teddy Roosevelt, Calvin Coolidge, Lyndon Johnson, Gerald Ford, and possibly Harry Truman all took office as the result of coups just in the last century. Richard Nixon appears to have done so by violently eliminating the competition.

Just because they are not recorded as coups in our history books doesn't mean that they didn't occur. And rest assured that when the official history of the current 'election' is written, the Bush coup will not be recorded for what it was either. As everyone knows, conspiracies don't exist in this country; things just sort of happen.

Like, for instance, in September of 1975, when two assassination attempts were made on President Ford. Had either attempt proven successful, Nelson Rockefeller would have stepped up from his position as the appointed vice-president to become the second consecutive unelected president of these United States.

And like when two men allegedly attempted to assassinate President Truman in November of 1951, as plans were being made for the 1952 presidential election campaign. The attempt of course failed, but Truman did rather unexpectedly opt not to run for a second elected term of office, clearing the way for an Eisenhower presidency.

In fact, every president who has taken office this past century as a direct result of assassination has inexplicably surrendered the job while still eligible for another term of office. As previously noted, Johnson did so in 1968. So did Teddy Roosevelt in 1908, clearing the way for William Taft. And Calvin Coolidge did likewise in 1928, clearing the playing field for Herbert Hoover.

There is one potential bright spot amidst all this discussion of assassination. The twenty year curse is still in effect! For the uninformed, this refers to the fact that, beginning 160 years ago, every president prior to Reagan elected in a twenty year cycle has died in office. These presidents were, in chronological order:

William Henry Harrison - elected in 1840, assassinated (?) in 1841

Abraham Lincoln - elected in 1860, assassinated in 1865

James Garfield - elected in 1880, assassinated in 1881

William McKinley - elected in 1900, assassinated in 1901

Warren Harding - elected in 1920, assassinated in 1923

Franklin Roosevelt - elected in 1940, assassinated (?) in 1945

John Kennedy - elected in 1960, assassinated in 1963

Had Reagan succumbed to his wounds, he would have joined that list. It can still be said though that every president elected on that twenty year cycle (since 1860 at least) has been the victim of a serious assassination *attempt*. This is true even if we assume that FDR's untimely death was by natural causes. On February 15th, 1933, a man named Giuseppe Zangara attempted to assassinate Roosevelt, but failed. He instead shot and killed Chicago Mayor Anton Cermak, who was with the president. Zangara was, of course, indicted, tried, convicted, sentenced and executed in less than five weeks.

Will the twenty year curse hold for the man who is about to take office following the year 2000 election? And if so, will the assassination attempt succeed? Will it be perpetrated by yet another 'lone nut' assassin? Frankly, it doesn't appear very likely. It just wouldn't seem

quite right to have a Bush be the *victim* of an assassination plot, but you never know. I'm thinking of Al Gore as the lone gunman. He could always claim that he shot Bush in a duel. It's a longshot, but it worked once before.

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Would You Mind If We Fingerprint Your Brain?

***By Dave McGowan
February 24, 2001***

Nothing is ever done for the good of the people, even when appearances may indicate otherwise. That is one of the inviolate rules of politics that must be applied when attempting to interpret any significant action, event or trend. A corollary to that rule is: *any new technology will be used to the detriment - and never the benefit - of the people.*

There is a consensus opinion developing though that the routine acceptance of DNA evidence in U.S. courts of law would be an exception to these rules. DNA evidence, we are told, is a way to right egregious miscarriages of justice. Indeed, crusading attorneys like Barry Scheck have built high-profile careers out of freeing the wrongly convicted. It is not likely though that exonerating the innocent is the ultimate goal of the DNA crowd. Emptying out the country's prisons doesn't seem to be real high on the state's priority list.

To the contrary, finding new ways - as well as new reasons - to incarcerate America seems to be the order of the day. The freeing of the falsely convicted makes for a nice way to sell DNA technology to the general public, however. It also makes for a nice way to sell another new technology -- 'Brain Fingerprinting.' In case you haven't heard, Brain Fingerprinting is a way to actually read a suspect's mind and determine whether or not he has committed a crime. No shit.

That is the claim made by the creator and chief proponent of the new technology, anyway. As *60 Minutes* reported on December 12th, 2000, allegedly 'civilian' scientist Larry Farwell "says that by analyzing the brain waves of a criminal suspect, he can tell whether or not that individual has committed a crime."

The eminent scientist explained to correspondent Mike Wallace that: "The fundamental difference between an innocent person and a guilty person is that a guilty person has committed a crime" -- an obviously brilliant observation by Harvard's finest. According to Farwell, this means that "the record is stored in his brain. Now we have a way to measure that scientifically." Also according to Farwell: "The brain never lies."

Guilt or innocence, then, can be determined simply by reading the suspect's mind. This ingenious concept has been embraced by, not surprisingly, all the usual suspects. As Wallace noted: "Dr. Farwell's work has been funded by the CIA," and "the FBI is also interested in Brain Fingerprinting and has allowed Dr. Farwell to test his technology at the Bureau's training academy in Quantico, Virginia." Also on board is Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA), who "has asked the General Accounting Office to study Farwell's technology to see if it should be federally funded."

Of course, we all know that the CIA and the FBI - not to mention the Republican-led

Congress - are uncompromising champions of justice, which is why the doctor is "using a 23-year-old murder case in Iowa to try to prove to a judge that his technology works." As with DNA evidence, the reactionary nature of this technology must be concealed in order to sell its merits to the people. Therefore, when Wallace asked the question of whether the technology will "be used more for exoneration than for nailing a suspect," he received the answer: "I think that's probably going to be where its usefulness is going to be most successful."

On Farwell's web site (<http://www.brainwavescience.com>), the doctor boldly proclaims his invention to be "a revolutionary new technology for investigating crimes and exonerating innocent suspects." Closer to the truth though is a statement that Farwell made to a reporter for the *Fairfield Ledger*: "I like catching the bad guys and bringing them to justice. I think that's a very important thing to do."

Assuming then, purely for the sake of argument of course, that the intentions of the CIA and its erstwhile partners are somewhat less than noble - and that freeing those who have unjustly spent a large portion of their lives behind bars is not the ultimate goal - it is not hard to see where such technology is heading. It is not hard, in fact, to envision a major revision in the American criminal justice system.

The propaganda war to gain popular support has already begun. The primary weapon is, of course, television -- perhaps the most powerful psychological warfare device ever created. In addition to providing a conduit for a non-stop barrage of propaganda, television has had a tremendously corrosive effect on American society.

I am told that prior to the advent of TV, families used to actually communicate with one another from time to time. I've also heard that neighborhoods and communities used to congregate in the evenings to socialize and to enjoy the entertainment provided by local artists and performers. Hard to believe, I know, but many an old-timer swears this to be true.

All of that began to change with the advent of radio and, more significantly, television. At first, of course, only a few could afford the luxury of television, leading to large gatherings at the homes of those fortunate enough to own a set. But before long, nearly every home had one, and community bonds began to break -- with each family retreating to its own home to receive its own personal dose of propaganda.

It wouldn't be long before most homes had multiple TV sets, breaking the family up into even smaller units to receive their evening 'entertainment.' Personal computers and the Internet have further atomized U.S. society, drawing each of us into our own private cyber-world. The ultimate goal is, clearly enough, to devolve society into a brutal, impersonal, every-man-for-himself struggle for survival -- a society devoid of empathy or sympathy.

Of course, it is possible that the destruction of societal bonds was just an unintended and entirely unforeseen consequence of the introduction of the new information media. This interpretation of historical events, however, violates yet another of the inviolate rules of political analysis: *almost nothing ever happens by chance, accident or happenstance -- and the consequences of an action are almost always intended.* But here I digress.

The point that I was getting to is that - apart from the negative societal impact that the medium itself has had - there is also the inescapable fact that television is a fantastically effective means of conveying propaganda. And make no mistake about it, *everything* that is beamed at you through your television is propaganda. It should go without saying that this applies to so-called news programming, which is obviously pure propaganda and is recognized as such by most any careful observer.

What is less well understood is that what we refer to as 'entertainment' programming is also largely propaganda, designed to promote a Western view of the world and to create a sort of tunnel-vision that limits our ability to think critically. And why shouldn't that be the case? Such programming is, after all, produced and broadcast by the very same select group of fascist media titans that bring you your news and information.

And, truth be told, much of the current batch of prime time programming is fairly easy to

recognize as propaganda. Some of the standouts are the hopelessly romanticized and sanitized view of Washington presented by *The West Wing*, the openly fascistic 'law-and-order' agenda promoted by *The District*, and that vision of America as a fully devolved surveillance state that we all know and love as *Survivor*.

Of particular interest here though are those shows that focus on the legal profession. There are certainly no shortage of such programs gracing America's airwaves these days, the most popular and critically acclaimed of which is probably David Kelley's *The Practice*. With the recognition that this program - along with countless similar shows - is not merely broadcast for its entertainment value, but as yet another effort by the thought police to shape public opinion, it is instructive to examine what message is being sent out to the viewing public.

The predominate message of *The Practice* - reinforced on a weekly basis - is that the current adversarial system of jurisprudence is seriously lacking in its ability to dispense justice. The guilt or innocence of the accused is consistently shown to have little or no bearing on the disposition of criminal cases. Defense attorneys routinely win acquittals for clients portrayed as being guilty, and regularly lose cases where their clients are perceived to be innocent.

As Richard Posner - law professor, judge, and probable intelligence asset - has stated: "It has become commonplace that an innocent person has a better chance of acquittal in a European than in an American court, and a guilty person, a better chance of acquittal in an American than in a European court."

It is certainly true that the adversarial system does lead to some egregious miscarriages of justice. These are often due to the extreme corruption of attorneys on both sides of the aisle, as well as various other players within the criminal justice system (the incompetence of various agents of the court sometimes plays a part as well). That's not the way that things play on TV though.

On the small screen, advocates for the state and the accused act with the utmost integrity -- and frequently with a healthy dose of moral outrage. Miscarriages of justice are portrayed as being a natural, and exceedingly common, consequence of the very structure of the American system of criminal justice. The system, in other words, is broken, and the integrity of the actors cannot compensate for that.

But is the system broken? There is no question that the win-at-all-costs mentality engendered by the adversarial system leads to false convictions. But that has always been the case - no more so now than at any other time in the nation's history - and the media, entertainment or otherwise, have never much cared before. Yet if the system is indeed broken now, then it has always been broken.

So why portray it as such now? The answer is, quite simply, because now we have an alternative on the horizon. We now have the ability to scientifically determine innocence or guilt, rendered as a purely objective judgment. DNA testing is claimed to be able to positively identify a person to the exclusion of literally billions of other potential suspects.

Likewise, Brain Fingerprinting is rather preposterously claimed by its inventor to have a "99.99% confidence" level. The argument can then be made: if we can determine a person's guilt to a scientific certainty, why bother with the archaic ritual of a trial? Has that not become an outdated concept? It will surely be argued that adversarial trials are a relic of the past -- a necessary evil to protect the rights of the falsely accused in the days of yore, but entirely unnecessary in an era where technology renders objective decisions.

Barry Scheck himself - hailed by pseudo-progressives for his work with the Innocence Project - publicly suggested in the wake of the Louise Woodward trial that a jury of 'experts' should have been convened to adjudicate such a complicated scientific case. And wasn't that, after all, the message sent to the public by the hideous reporting on the OJ trial? Were we not essentially told that the jury was just too stupid to evaluate the significance of the scientific

evidence?

Is this the direction we are headed in the not-too-distant future? Will the convening of 'scientific panels' replace the current juries of our peers? And will this be merely a step towards the elimination of juries altogether, as well as of advocates for the state and the accused? Will justice be dispensed with seeming scientific certainty in the near future? It seems reasonable to assume that this will come to pass.

This won't happen overnight, of course. The restructuring of the criminal justice system will take some time. Every step in the process, of course, will be hailed as a progressive advance. For instance, it will be claimed that no longer will high-dollar lawyers be able to subvert justice for the rich. The playing field will be leveled, with justice no longer for sale; all defendants will be treated equally, with verdicts dependent solely on innocence or guilt. Yeah, right. Nice fairy tale -- but back here on planet Earth, a different reality presents itself.

The most glaring problem with this vision of future justice is that the people who will be analyzing and interpreting the scientific data are the very same people who are currently funding the research -- our good friends at the CIA and various other interwoven intelligence agencies. By fully co-opting all such 'emerging' technology, the national intelligence infrastructure will achieve total control of the dispensation of 'justice.' And that, my friends, is definitely not a good thing.

As *Esquire* magazine reported in January of 2001: "If you're accused of a crime, the last thing you want to see is an FBI forensic expert testifying for the prosecution. With their aura of independence and integrity, these agents exert a powerful sway over juries. But as the cases of Ralph Plotner and others show, these witnesses are too often the purveyors of contaminated evidence and utter falsehood."

The reality is that adversarial trials, however flawed they may be, are all that stand between you and the unfathomable coercive powers of the state. A good defense attorney and a jury of your peers constitute the best - and only - protection you have from indiscriminate persecution. That is why our current system, warts and all, is infinitely better than the brave new world we are heading towards. But then maybe I'm just paranoid.

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It's Beginning to Sound a Lot Like Waco

Dave McGowan
September 4, 2001

When the ATF comes to town, things just seem to have a way of getting out of hand. Consider the shootout that occurred in the exclusive Stevenson Ranch neighborhood in Santa Clarita, California (a northern suburb of Los Angeles) on August 31, 2001.

According to the official story, agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the U.S. Marshal's Service, along with officers from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's office, arrived that morning at the home of James Allen Beck, allegedly to serve a search warrant in conjunction with an investigation into charges that Beck had been impersonating an officer and was in possession of illegal firearms.

As the team of roughly a dozen officers approached the house, Beck reportedly opened fire on them with an automatic weapon, thus beginning a shootout/standoff with the authorities that lasted for several hours, ending when Beck's home burned to the ground after being blasted full of tear gas. By that time, officers from the California Highway Patrol and the Los Angeles Police Department had joined in the siege.

One of the officers involved, Sheriff's Deputy Hagop "Jake" Kuredjian, was killed with a shot purportedly fired by the suspect, who died as well in the fire that consumed his home. No one else was injured in the raid and the various agencies involved patted themselves on the back for another job well done. Unfortunately, there are many unanswered questions.

When and how exactly did Beck 'open fire' on the officers?

According to the initial report in the *Los Angeles Times*, Beck "opened fire through his front door after federal agents and two sheriff's officials tried to serve a search warrant at his home." (1) A spokesman for the U.S. Marshal's office, William Woolsey, claimed that "We were attempting to serve a search warrant ... and the guy opened up on us. He opened fire. Automatic weapon fire." (1)

That very same report though has Woolsey telling a different story: "After Beck fired one round, Woolsey said, the officers backed off and Beck yelled, 'My girlfriend is coming out through the garage, don't hurt her.' An unidentified woman emerged from the home, and sheriff's officials said Friday night that she was being questioned ... With his girlfriend gone, Beck resumed shooting after yelling at the officers not to hurt his dog." (1)

Firing a single round hardly qualifies as "automatic weapon fire," and it hardly seems likely that the officers wouldn't have sought cover and returned fire immediately had a shot been fired. A report in the *Los Angeles Daily News* painted a much different picture of the

initial confrontation: "agents tried to knock down the door, then gunfire erupted as officers tried to go through a window." (5)

That was largely the story being told by CNN as well: "When agents tried to enter the house through a window, authorities said, Beck opened fire on them with an automatic weapon." (11) The CNN report also claimed that Beck "came to the door a couple of times and refused to come out." (11)

A slightly different version of events appeared in an *Associated Press* report: "Authorities said Beck answered his door about 8:30 a.m. Friday but stormed back inside after a few words from officers. Witnesses said he began shooting when they shouted for him to come out and tried to break down the door." (17) The *Daily News* had the gunfight beginning somewhat earlier, at 8:15. (5)

The *Associated Press* carried a report that stated that: "The man fired hundreds of shots at the start of the standoff, when agents tried to arrest him for allegedly impersonating an officer," (16) though an *AP* report just a few days later claimed that: "The total number of rounds fired was unclear and authorities would not give an estimate." (18)

What then really transpired in the initial encounter between the officers and the suspect? Did Beck come to the door or didn't he? Were there words exchanged before shots were fired or weren't there? Did Beck fire a single shot or a volley of automatic weapon fire? Were the officers attempting to gain forced entry into the home or were they still approaching the house? Officials have offered nothing in the way of clarification.

Exactly when, and by whom, was Deputy Kuredjian killed?

The majority of the reports on the shootout implied, or stated outright, that Kuredjian was one of the officers who made the initial approach to the house and was killed in the first exchange of gunfire. A *Times* report, for instance, held that: "Beck ... opened fire on a team of law enforcement agents, killing one of them, as they approached his house to search it for illegal firearms." (3)

The *Daily News* claimed that: "Kuredjian, 40, died in the first moments of the confrontation when he assisted about a dozen U.S. marshals and agents of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms in trying to arrest James Allen Beck on charges of impersonating an officer and of being a felon in possession of weapons." (5)

A separate report in the very same edition of the *Daily News* had a much smaller force approaching the house: "Beck shot and killed Los Angeles County sheriff's Deputy Hagop "Jake" Kuredjian on Friday while he and five other officers attempted to search Beck's Stevenson Ranch home, believing Beck had been stockpiling weapons and impersonating an officer." (7)

The version of events presented by CNN.com was that: "Deputy Hagop "Jake" Kuredjian was killed Friday morning as a man suspected of federal weapons violations opened fire on agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and local authorities." (13) ABC said that: "Deputy Jake Kuredjian was shot as he tried to serve Martin (sic) Beck a warrant for his arrest at his Santa Clarita, Calif. home at 8:30 a.m. on Friday." (12)

In fact though, Kuredjian was not on the scene when the first shots rang out, but arrived there, according to the *L.A. Times*, "after responding to a call of shots fired." (1) The same *Times* report explained that: "Kuredjian, on patrol in the area, was shot as he was getting off his motorcycle, which was parked behind a large red sport utility vehicle several houses away from Beck's home, authorities said." (1)

Sheriff's spokesman Lt. Carl H. Deeley echoed that account: "He stopped four doors east of the suspect's house. He took cover behind vehicles and was shot almost immediately after getting here." (1) A follow-up report by the *Times* verified the earlier report: "The deputy arrived a few minutes after the shooting started and was hit almost immediately, as he

crouched behind an SUV four houses down from the Beck home, officials said.” (9)

What we are to believe then, apparently, is that the suspect opened fire on a group of twelve or more agents from close range and yet failed to hit any of them [the *Times* reported that there were “no other injuries,” (1) while the *Daily News* noted that “One ATF agent suffered an injury to his wrist in the battle” (5)], and then proceeded to pick off officer Kuredjian with a single shot to the head from some 150-200 feet away while the officer was *behind an SUV* and, according to the *Times*, “wearing a motorcycle helmet.” (10)

Sounds perfectly reasonable to me. A comment made by Kuredjian’s superior provided further indication that the deputy was not initially a part of the operation. The *Daily News* reported that: “[Santa Clarita Sheriff’s station chief Don] Rodriguez said he was unclear how or why Kuredjian was selected to accompany two U.S. marshals and two agents with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms in the attempted search of Beck’s Brooks Circle home.” (4)

Rodriguez was clearly baffled by the disinformational reports claiming that Kuredjian had joined in the initial assault upon the home. What appears to have happened was that the deputy had the grave misfortune of being on patrol in the immediate vicinity of the siege and responded too quickly to the reports of shots fired, or possibly was even close enough to have heard the shots himself. Arriving at the perimeter of the operation “within minutes,” (10) he was killed almost immediately.

On Sunday evening, September 2, NBC News reported that: “The *Associated Press* reports that an L.A. County Sheriff’s official said that it’s not determined who fired the deadly shot.” (8) The *AP* report in question had begun: “The investigation into a deadly California standoff has raised questions about whether the suspect fired the bullet that killed a deputy or whether the officer was mistakenly hit by a fellow lawman.” (18) Included was the following statement by Sheriff’s Sgt. Paul Patterson: “I am quite sure that is something we’re going to look into, because it’s not clear he was shot by Beck.” (18)

This report was quickly met with a flurry of official denials. A statement issued by the Sheriff’s Department referred to it as: “an unfortunate piece of prevarication that smacks of tabloid journalism.” (13) Deeley stated flatly that “There isn’t even a remote chance that friendly fire was the cause of death of Deputy Kuredjian,” (13) and “Without a doubt, it was Beck who shot him.” (10)

On the NBC News’ broadcast, a stammering Lt. Deeley asserted that: “There is absolutely no doubt that the fatal shot fired at Deputy Jake Kuredjian came from suspect James Beck, and I’ll give you two of the reasons right now. The angle of the shot and where Deputy Kuredjian was hit came from above and the angle proves that the shot did come from suspect Beck and that second story of his house. And also during negotiations ... he apologized for shooting the deputy.” (8)

The media was quick to fall in line with the position of the various police agencies. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that: “Preliminary autopsy and ballistics findings confirm that a Santa Clarita Valley gunman who held officers at bay Friday fired the shot that killed a deputy, Los Angeles County sheriff’s officials said Monday.” (10)

The *Daily News* joined in with: “The Los Angeles County Coroner’s Office found Saturday that based on the trajectory of the bullet, there was no doubt that Kuredjian had been shot from above. That rules out the possibility that surfaced this weekend that the deputy was shot by another law enforcement officer by mistake.” (14)

CNN featured the following quote from Deeley: “The homicide bureau has stated that the trajectory of the bullet and the wound, where it was, proved that the bullet came from the second floor of the house, fired by suspect Beck,” and also repeated the claim that Beck had acknowledged and apologized for the shooting of Kuredjian. (13)

Both of these claims though are transparently fraudulent, though they went unchallenged by the various media representatives. The very same Lt. Deeley had been quoted just the day

before as saying that “No one saw Beck shoot Jake. People right next to him just saw him go down. There were so many shots going off; it’s hard to tell where they [we]re coming from.” (9)

Hard to tell where they were coming from? How many possibilities are there? Considering that there was only one suspect, and he was said to have been in the house throughout the siege, that sort of limits the possibilities. All the other shots, one would assume, would be directed *toward* the house.

As for the claim that the angle of the shot proved that it was fired from the house, there would be no way of determining that fact since, as Deeley had already acknowledged, no one had seen the officer get shot. Therefore, there was no way of knowing how the officer's head was oriented when the fatal bullet struck him. The path that the bullet traveled through his head was a function of both the angle of the shot and the orientation of the target. Without knowing which direction he was looking, and whether he had his head tilted either up or down or left or right, it is simply not possible to determine where the shot originated from.

That didn't stop the *L.A. Times* from claiming that "A sheriff's investigation found that the bullet that struck Kuredjian in the head traveled in a 'steep downward arc' from the second floor of Beck's home," (10) again according to Lt. Deeley. Lt. Raymond Peavy, of the Sheriff's Homicide Division, added that “No other officers [other than Beck?] were at that high of a level.” (10)

This was, it should be noted, a rather odd choice of words considering that Beck was not, according to official reports, an officer. It should also be noted that even if the shot had been fired from the second-story window of the home, it would have only placed the shooter perhaps 15 feet above the target at a distance of 150 feet or more.

The angle of such a shot would hardly be a "steep downward arc," but would in fact be so slight that it would be negated by even a slight tilt of the head. If, however, Kuredjian had been crouching as some reports maintain, and he had been shot by someone standing nearby, then the bullet would indeed have followed a steep path downward.

As for the claims that the suspect took responsibility before being incinerated, no evidence was produced to support that contention. The suspect, of course, was dead, and so in no position to confirm or deny the claims. As these statements attributed to Beck were made over the phone though, they would undoubtedly have been taped if they had in fact been made. There is little doubt that if the Sheriff's office had such statements on tape, they would have been quickly released to the news media.

The *L.A. Times* attempted to introduce yet one more piece of alleged evidence to support the stance of the authorities: "About the time Kuredjian was shot, authorities also reported hearing a boom louder than any of the previous rounds of gunfire and seeing a puff of smoke coming from the second-floor window." (10) Perhaps that is supposed to explain how the bullet got through a large vehicle and a helmet before ripping into Kuredjian's brain.

As the evidence now stands, all indications are of a death by 'friendly fire' that wasn't all that friendly. All that can be said for sure though at this point is that "Autopsy results Saturday showed that Kuredjian died of a single gunshot wound to the head," and that "Kuredjian arrived a few minutes after the shooting started and was hit almost immediately." (15)

How did the fire start and why did it so quickly devour the house?

Initial reports held that: “sheriff's deputies blasted as many as 15 tear gas canisters into the Beck home. Top-ranking sheriff's officials ordered the tear-gas barrage, aiming it at the home's second story, after Beck allegedly shot Kuredjian from a second-floor window.” (1)

This report is, we should note here, very deceptive. In truth, the barrage didn't come until *several hours* after Kuredjian was shot and killed, as the *Daily News* acknowledged: “After a four-hour standoff, the man's house burst into flames – either from tear gas fired by

officers or because he set fire to it.” (5) Of course, the various department spokesmen denied there was any connection between the firing of the canisters and the fire.

The *Times* noted that “Although the use of tear gas has controversial associations with fires, a sheriff’s spokesman said investigators did not think the canisters had ignited the fire.” (1) Sheriff’s Deputy Harry Drucker added that “They believe that the fire was started by the suspect and wasn’t started by tear gas.” (1) CNN stated flatly that: “James Beck died in the fire he set Friday.” (11)

Indeed, the speed and ferocity with which the fire engulfed the home hinted that perhaps neither the tear gas nor the suspect were to blame – some of the canisters fired at the home could well have been incendiary charges (we are talking about the ATF here). According to the *Daily News*, “The blaze erupted on the second floor of the home at 11:51 a.m. Friday.” (6) Less than an hour later, “By 12:40 p.m., the entire second floor was gutted.” (1)

By 3:00 p.m., the fire was declared to be out, and Beck’s home had been reduced to “a blackened foundation.” (5) The complete destruction of the home was hastened by the fact that “As [the home] burned with an armed man barricaded inside Friday, police and firefighters stood by and just watched.” (6) An *Associated Press* report agreed that “Firefighters stood by as the fire engulfed the house in the upscale neighborhood.” (16)

Firefighters did though, “working from a distance, [protect] the houses on either side while Beck’s house burned to the ground.” (5) The Fire Department didn’t take action, according to the *Times*, until “about 12:30 p.m.,” at which time “sheriff’s and fire officials decided to direct a water-spraying aerial ladder and a hose on Beck’s house.” (9) Prior to that time, Sheriff’s deputies purportedly “would not allow firefighters to come near the house to douse the flames because of safety concerns.” (11)

Strangely though, the department had arrived on the scene in force nearly four hours before that, just after the shooting began and more than three hours before there was any indication that their services would be needed: “County fire officials responded to the incident with four engine companies, a truck company and two paramedic squads at about 8:37 a.m., [Los Angeles County Fire Department spokesman Mike] Brown said.” (9)

Why was this warrant being served? And why was it served in a raid on the home?

As a neighbor pointed out, “No one tells us anything ... We saw [Beck] walking his German shepherd at all hours of the day. Why wouldn’t they serve him [with the warrant] then?” (9) A perfectly valid question, and one that was echoed by other neighbors. Authorities were in fact well aware that Beck was in the habit of taking his dog on frequent walks, during any one of which he could have been served the warrant without incident.

It was claimed that the search warrant arose out of tips from neighbors who had grown suspicious of Beck and reported those suspicions. He had allegedly bragged to them of working for the U.S. Marshal’s Service or for the FBI and also claimed to be stockpiling weapons. When the *L.A. Times* talked to those in the area, they found that “most neighbors said they found nothing sinister about Beck.” (1) An *AP* reporter found that “Some neighbors described him as social and generally nice,” and that “Several residents of the upscale neighborhood said Beck often socialized with them.” (17)

Who then were these neighbors whose fears prompted the search? The answer may well lie in the demographic make-up of the Stevenson Ranch development, and of Santa Clarita in general – it is loaded with cops. As the *Times* reported, “Fully 10% of Los Angeles police officers live in Santa Clarita, more than live in the city they patrol.” (2)

To illustrate the density of the police population, the *Times* told the story of a Beverly Hills publicist who, when he “moved his young family to Stevenson Ranch two years ago, the real estate agent assured them ‘You couldn’t go more than three houses without running into a police officer.’ Sure enough, his neighbors include a sheriff’s deputy and an LAPD officer.”

(2)

Was it local law enforcement personnel who had 'reported' the alleged claims being made by Beck? And if not, then why were they not the ones to whom their fellow neighbors reported their suspicions, rather than improbably phoning them in to the U.S. Marshal's office and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms? If you live in a police 'ghetto,' do you really need to place calls to these agencies to report a suspected crime?

A report in the Sunday *Times* noted that: "The specific reasons for the search are laid out in an affidavit by a federal agent that was shown to a federal prosecutor and a federal judge, both of whom approved the search." The same report though added that: "[Southern California head of the ATF Donald] Kincaid said the affidavit was sealed and he would not discuss its specifics." (9)

Was there an arsenal of weapons and ammunition in the suspect's home?

Of primary concern, according to officials, was the alleged arsenal of weapons being assembled by Beck. There are serious doubts, however, about whether such a cache existed. As the *Times* pointed out, the fire that destroyed Beck's home would likely have caused the ammunition to "explode, spraying the area with bullets." (1) Reporters on the scene observed that "There was no indication that any such explosions occurred." (1)

There is also doubt about whether law enforcement officials really believed that such a cache existed. One report held that after the second floor of the house gave way to the fire at 1:15 p.m., "Some of the SWAT team members began taking off their helmets, apparently convinced that Beck could no longer be a threat." (1)

While it may well be true that Beck was no longer a threat at that time, a large cache of ammunition on the ground floor would still have posed a considerable threat, not only to the officers, but to anyone else in the general vicinity of the siege. And the fact that law enforcement personnel had adopted a strategy of igniting the house in the first place strongly suggests that they didn't seriously consider the possibility that the residence was stockpiled with ammunition.

Officials did ultimately claim to have found a number of firearms in the smoldering embers of Beck's home. Included on that list were "three assault rifles ... including an AK-47 and AR-15, as well as a shotgun, a .380-caliber semiautomatic pistol and other handguns." (9) Notably absent from that list was the "automatic weapon" with which Beck had allegedly opened fire to begin the shootout.

Who exactly was James Allen Beck?

One thing that is known is that he was a former police officer himself. In 1987, he had been accepted onto the Arcadia police force. He was let go just over a year later, for reasons that remain unclear. The chief of the Arcadia force, Dave Hinig, provided only vague answers for reporters, citing confidentiality laws.

Approximately two years after leaving the Arcadia force, Beck "began racking up a long string of arrests and convictions." (3) According to the *L.A. Times*, he was "first convicted in 1990 for receiving stolen property—a Remington 870 shotgun and a .25 caliber Baretta. He was also convicted of grand theft, firearms violations and fraudulent use of someone else's credit card, on which he charged more than \$1,300. He was sentenced to two years in state prison." (3)

"In the years that followed, Beck was arrested numerous other times: on suspicion of possession of firearms, receiving stolen property, carrying firearms in public, impersonating a police officer and being a felon in possession of an assault weapon. He was again sentenced to prison, this time for four years, law enforcement and court records show." (3)

The rather obvious question begged here is: how was it possible for him to *again* be arrested, convicted and sentenced to prison when he should have already been in prison, serving the sentence that he had already received? As the story continues, we find that “In late 1992, Beck was convicted again, of first degree residential burglary with the intent to commit larceny. Court documents say he broke into a trailer. That time, he was sentenced to six years in state prison.” (3)

By this time Beck had apparently racked up prison sentences totaling twelve years, and yet had by all appearances not yet served any of that time. He was either a very lucky man, or he had some people in high places looking out for him. Following the 1992 conviction, “It is not known what became of Beck ... or how he was able to afford to move into Stevenson Ranch in November.” (3)

As it turns out though, law enforcement officials were well aware of Beck's whereabouts at least a year before the siege on his home. As ATF chief Kincaid revealed, his “bureau had conducted a similar search a year ago at a different address, which Kincaid could not specify.” (9) This revelation came about as authorities scrambled to explain how the serving of a search warrant had veered so wildly out of control.

Kincaid explained that because of that earlier encounter with the suspect, “the ATF had reason to believe that Beck would be cooperative Friday morning.” (9) Because of this, spokesmen claimed, “The violence that claimed the life of a Los Angeles County sheriff's deputy in the Santa Clarita Valley caught authorities off guard.” (9)

What this report failed to note was that the initial officers on the scene had “arrived about 5 a.m.” (5) What the officers were doing at the location for over three hours before allegedly first approaching the house was not explained. You would think though that that would have provided them with ample opportunity to assess the situation and be prepared for a confrontation with the suspect.

Nevertheless, the scene reportedly quickly degenerated into “such chaos that officers fired not only at the suspect but into homes on both sides of his, officials said Saturday.” (9) According to Sheriff's Captain Ray Leyva: “We did hit the houses on either side. I don't know exactly what was happening at the time, I don't know how well [the deputies'] aim was, but they were returning fire and trying to rescue someone, so I'm sure they were hitting things during the battle.” (9)

Excuse me? He didn't know how well his officers' aim was? You would think that - being that these are men who are trained, authorized and have been qualified to carry and use firearms - they would at the very least be able to, quite literally, hit the broad side of a fucking barn. I would venture to guess that most people, even those who have *never* fired a gun, could hit a large two-story house from across the street.

Nevertheless, “The two houses next door to Beck's ... [were found to be] pocked with numerous bullet marks.” (9) There are three possible explanations for this. The first was already mentioned – that the officers' aim was, shall we say, a little off. That hardly seems likely.

The second is that the various departments involved were so thoroughly incompetent and reckless that they just opened fire without having any idea of what they were supposed to be firing at. If so, that is a most disturbing scenario, especially given that one of the homes being riddled with gunfire was at the time occupied by “a couple and their 30-hour-old newborn.” (15) The baby's father told reporters that “The shots came through our [front] window and into our house.” (9)

The third possibility is perhaps the most disturbing of all – that these homes were deliberately targeted to create the impression that a two-way gun battle was raging, when in fact the only shots being fired were those fired by the officers. Such a strategy would serve to insure that any potential witnesses were forced to take cover or evacuate, and would therefore be unable to observe what was happening around the Beck home.

Authorities in fact made a concerted effort to evacuate the neighborhood, ostensibly for safety reasons, though the only bullets that appear to have entered any of the neighbors' homes were those fired by the officers on the scene. ABC reported that "Law enforcement officials urged several Santa Clarita residents to leave their homes when the standoff began," (12) and the *AP* added that "Authorities evacuated about 100 people from the neighborhood." (17)

Perhaps there is a similar explanation of claims made by the *Times* that Beck had been "allegedly firing not only at police on the ground, but at police and news media helicopters." (1) It is not beyond the realm of possibility that the shots were fired to keep the media at bay during the early stages of the operation, and fired by someone other than Beck.

What we have here then, or so it would appear, is a case of a search warrant that could have been peacefully served but wasn't, thereby leading to a gunfight in which it was unclear how the first shots were fired, and during which an officer was killed by 'friendly fire,' with the standoff ending when the building under siege was completely destroyed by a fire of uncertain origin. Now, where have I heard this story before

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[HOME](#)



Biowarfare: Made in America?

David McGowan
October 6, 2001

Despite the best efforts of U.S. officials to cast the nation of Pakistan as a staunch ally in the Orwellian 'War on Terrorism,' the truth is that it is only a handful of illegitimate leaders of that nation that have pledged their support to American military goals. The vast majority of the Pakistani people support neither America's ill-defined war nor their own unelected government.

Some readers will no doubt recall that the current Pakistani head of state, General Pervez Musharraf, took power nearly two years ago in a decidedly undemocratic military coup that toppled the elected government of that country, with the blessings of the United States (undoubtedly as a preliminary chess-move aimed at facilitating the long-planned assault on Afghanistan).

In a move that was likely aimed at garnering the support of the Pakistani people for the illegitimate regime, Musharraf's administration, like those before it, had supported the Taliban in Afghanistan prior to September 11. As the *World Socialist Web Site* has noted, "Successive Pakistani governments and the military have openly backed the Taliban, providing finance, arms and training for its fighters." (1)

Nevertheless, the Afghani people have not been prone to accept the leadership of those thrust into power by undemocratic means. This has become all the more true as Musharraf has openly allied himself with the United States, even going so far as to proclaim that the non-existent 'evidence' put forth by the British government "provides sufficient basis for indictment in a court of law." (2)

That is quite a remarkable interpretation of the 'proof' supplied by Tony Blair and company, given that the drafters of the document themselves acknowledge in the very first sentence that: "This document does not purport to provide a prosecutable case against Osama bin Laden in a court of law." (3) In truth, it doesn't even come close to presenting a prosecutable case, but that's another story entirely.

Musharraf's wholehearted acceptance of the Western-supplied 'evidence' can only serve to further fan the flames of discontent among the Pakistani people. As the *World Socialist Web Site* noted, the General "is facing an increasingly volatile domestic situation, with protests against his support for Washington continuing to mount. On October 2, around 50,000 people took part in a protest organised by the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (JUI) party in Quetta." (1)

The *Sidney Morning Herald* added that: "In one of the largest demonstrations so far in support of the Taliban and the accused terrorist Osama bin Laden, Muslim extremists served

notice to Pakistan not to back a United States military strike against Afghanistan. Police armed with semi-automatic weapons confined foreigners to their hotels in the city of Quetta, close to the Afghan border, as an estimated 40,000 protesters armed with sticks moved in a convoy of cars, trucks and buses, and on foot, from the airport to the city centre." (4)

The WWSW report held that Quetta has been described as a "hot bed of Taliban supporters," and that according to a reporter on the scene, "Quetta is already on a war footing." (1) It also happens to be "a destination for hundreds of thousands of Afghans fleeing drought and war," (5) which could easily push the simmering tensions past the boiling point and destabilize all or part of Pakistan, creating serious problems for both the U.S. and the Pakistani ruling junta.

It is interesting then to note that there is an unusual twist to this situation that the American press, and most of the European press, have almost completely ignored. As the *News Telegraph* reported: "The largest outbreak in history of a highly contagious disease that causes patients to bleed to death from every orifice was confirmed yesterday on Pakistan's frontier with Afghanistan. At least 75 people have caught the disease so far and eight have died. An isolation ward screened off by barbed wire has been set up in the Pakistani city of Quetta ...

"Evidence suggests the outbreak of Crimean-Congo Haemorrhagic Fever emanates from within Afghanistan, raising fears of an epidemic if millions of refugees flee across the frontier into Pakistan. CCHF has similar effects to the ebola virus. Both viruses damage arteries, veins and other blood vessels and lead to the eventual collapse of major organs. As one doctor put it, a patient suffering from haemorrhagic fever 'literally melts in front of your eyes.'" (6)

The location and the rather curious timing of this outbreak, the largest in history, raise serious questions about its origin. As Dr. Taj Mohammad of the Fatima Jinnah Chest and General Hospital in Quetta told a reporter: "It's unheard of - very unusual. There's a real risk of an epidemic among Afghan refugees." (5)

A fact sheet distributed by the World Health Organization notes that, "Although primarily a zoonosis, sporadic cases and outbreaks of CCHF affecting humans do occur." (7) The report goes on to say that, since the virus primarily affects animals, "The majority of cases (of human infection) have occurred in those involved with the livestock industry, such as agricultural workers, slaughterhouse workers and veterinarians." (7)

There is no indication that the inordinately high number of Afghani victims were employed in such professions. How then did they contract this feared disease? Experts have opined that the most likely culprit is "a species of tick, *Hyalomma marginatum*, common in the [afflicted] areas." (6) The WHO fact sheet notes that a "number of tick genera are capable of becoming infected with CCHF virus ... " (7)

Is this outbreak then a natural occurrence? Not necessarily. A brief review of the use of insects as carriers of biological warfare agents is in order here. According to Robert Harris and Jeremy Paxman's *A Higher Form of Killing*, that history began during World War II, when the Japanese "cultivated the plague-infected flea as a biological weapon. Pingfan [a biowarfare lab] was said to be capable of producing 500 million fleas a year." (8)

Following the war, that technology was warmly embraced by America's biowarfare engineers, who had their Japanese counterparts flown over to the States to share the tricks of the trade. Fort Detrick, the longtime home of American biological warfare research, soon became the world's premier site for developing such weapons of war as the 'flea bomb':

"Among the potential agents studied at Camp Detrick were anthrax, glanders, brucellosis, tularemia, melioidosis, plague, typhus, psittacosis, yellow fever, encephalitis and various forms of rickettsial disease; fowl pest and rinder-pest were among the animal viruses studied; various rice, potato and cereal blights were also investigated." (8)

Evidence clearly suggests that such weapons were utilized by the United States in the war waged against North Korea. American pilots captured during the war confessed to

dropping flea bombs on the people of North Korea, and Chinese officials published photographs of what they claimed to be "American biological bombs." (8) The U.S., of course, dismissed these reports as ludicrous, claiming that the pilots had been 'brainwashed' into offering the confessions.

The Chinese though assembled an international committee of scientists - from the United Kingdom, Italy, France, Sweden, Brazil and the Soviet Union - which in October of 1952 released a 700-page report that concluded that "the peoples of Korea and China did actually serve as targets for bacteriological weapons." (8)

The detailed report listed the techniques that had been deployed in that war, "which ranged from fountain pens filled with infectious ink, to anthrax-laden feathers, and fleas, lice and mosquitoes carrying plague and yellow fever." (8) The U.S., needless to say, continued to deny and/or ignore the evidence indicating the use of biowarfare agents, and continued to research and develop these blatantly illegal and indiscriminate killers:

"In 1956 the army began investigating the feasibility of breeding fifty million fleas a week, presumably to spread plague. By the end of the fifties the Fort Detrick laboratories were said to contain mosquitos infected with yellow fever, malaria and dengue (an acute viral disease also known as Breakbone Fever for which there is no cure); fleas infected with plague; ticks contaminated with tularemia; and flies infected with cholera, anthrax and dysentery." (8)

It would appear then that the United States has a long history of researching and developing infected insects as biological warfare agents, and hasn't been shy about deploying such weapons specifically to inflict massive civilian casualties. Just one week before the September 11 attacks, the *New York Times* reported that U.S. biological weapons research was still very much alive-and-well, though cloaked as always as 'defensive' research:

"Over the past several years, the United States has embarked on a program of secret research on biological weapons that, some officials say, tests the limits of the global treaty banning such weapons ... The projects, which have not been previously disclosed, were begun under President Clinton and have been embraced by the Bush administration, which intends to expand them." (9)

In light of this history, is it really merely a fluke of nature that this outbreak has occurred at this particular time and in this particular place? And is it also just a bizarre coincidence that, as *The Scotsman* has reported, "A spokesman for the United Nations High Commission for Refugees said many children are facing a new threat from a potentially fatal strain of malaria which has appeared in southern Afghanistan in recent months"? (10)

And what are we to make of the fact that the U.S. media, busily promoting fear among the people with constant warnings of an imminent biowarfare attack upon America, have had nothing to say about this impending catastrophe in Afghanistan? And what, for that matter, are we to make of the fact that the World Health Organization quickly moved to downplay and discredit the trickle of reports that surfaced in the European press?

In a report carried by the *BBC*, WHO officials claimed that: "Reports warning of an outbreak of a deadly viral disease similar to Ebola on the frontier between Afghanistan and Pakistan are 'incorrect and misleading.'" (11) This report was filled with deliberate distortions of fact that were directly contradicted by experts on the scene, as well as by the WHO's own *Fact Sheet* on the virus.

The *BBC*'s Andrew Webb, for instance, claimed that "So far, there has been no official diagnosis." (11) The *News Telegraph*, however, reported that: "A number of blood samples were sent to Pakistan's national virology testing centre in Islamabad. They were then sent to South Africa's National Institute of Virology in Johannesburg for confirmation." (6) The disease was, in fact, confirmed.

The disinformational *BBC* report also claimed that: "WHO says the reports caught the attention of the international media because there are many journalists in the area looking for

stories." (11) This flies in the face of the rather obvious fact that the Western media in general, and the American press in particular, haven't bothered to report on *anything* occurring in the region, especially in regards to the plight of the refugees.

The report goes on to state that: "WHO says there have been only 35 reported cases of the virus in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region this year and only four people are currently being treated." (11) In truth though, "Dr. Taj Mohammad of the Fatima Jinnah Chest and General Hospital in Quetta said his facility had received a total of almost 70 cases this year," (5) all of which are documented in the hospital's case files.

Ian Simpson of the WHO is quoted as saying that "Nothing suggests it will get worse," (11) when in fact many observers have noted that there are clear indications that the situation will almost certainly get worse. David Horrocks, the Afghanistan project manager for Christian Aid, was merely stating the obvious when he said: "The condition of the refugees makes the risk of disease and epidemics rife. They are suffering severe malnutrition and dehydration which has reduced their immune system, and they are a very concentrated group." (10)

Stratfor has noted that: "Pakistan has a serious biohazard problem on its hands given the ease of transmission factored in with the limited sanitation facilities in refugee camps. Unfortunately the situation may grow much worse." (12) And the *BBC* itself had reported that "The horrendous sanitary conditions provide an ideal breeding ground for the virus." (5)

Simpson also attempts in the second *BBC* report to downplay the considerable health risk posed by CCHF, claiming that comparisons to the Ebola virus are unwarranted: "It doesn't spread as quickly, and there is a significantly higher recovery rate." (11) The WHO's own *Fact Sheet* though acknowledges that "CCHF is a severe disease in humans, with a high mortality." (7)

The report in *The Scotsman* described the rapid onset of the disease: "Within three days of infection, victims develop a rash and, after five, they start to bleed from orifices." (10) *Stratfor* added that "About half of those who contract the virus die within two weeks." (12) The WHO handout concurred that death usually occurs "in the second week of illness." (7)

As for the ease with which the disease can spread, the WHO's *Fact Sheet* notes that "When patients with CCHF are admitted to the hospital, there is a risk of nosocomial [hospital-acquired] spread of infection. In the past, serious outbreaks have occurred in this way and it is imperative that adequate infection control measures be observed to prevent this disastrous outcome." (7)

If there is a serious risk of the disease being rapidly spread in a sterile, controlled hospital environment, it should be fairly obvious that that risk is greatly multiplied in the crowded, unsanitary conditions in which the refugees now find themselves.

The *BBC* report ends rather remarkably by stressing that the "WHO says that rumours of CCHF being spread as biological warfare are nonsense," (11) though the plea of innocence is made to a charge that hadn't even been made, or at least not reported. The closest anyone had come was when *Stratfor* mentioned a "concern that the United States might be accused of engaging in biological weapons attacks." (12) Why then issue a preemptive denial through the WHO?

The first confirmed case in the current outbreak was in June of this year, which would seem initially to rule out the possibility of a biological warfare operation, since officially - as we all know - this military action wasn't planned until after September 11. However, there is little doubt that this war was planned long before the events took place that provided the pretext for launching it.

The *BBC* has reported that: "Niaz Naik, a former Pakistani Foreign Secretary, was told by senior American officials in mid-July that military action against Afghanistan would go ahead by the middle of October." (13) Similarly, *Indiareacts.com*, a self-described public affairs portal, reported on June 26 that "India and Iran will 'facilitate' US and Russian plans

for 'limited military action' against the Taliban if the contemplated tough new economic sanctions don't bend Afghanistan's fundamentalist regime ...

"Indian officials say that India and Iran will only play the role of 'facilitator' while the US and Russia will combat the Taliban from the front with the help of two Central Asian countries, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan ... Military action will be the last option though it now seems scarcely avoidable with the UN banned from Taliban-controlled areas." (14)

Assuming then that planning for the current military campaign was already well advanced by June of this year, there is little question that covert operations would have been ongoing at that time. Interestingly enough, *Stratfor* off-handedly mentioned that there was another outbreak of the disease at about that same time – in another part of the world where U.S. covert operations run rampant: "Earlier this summer more than 30 cases surfaced in Kosovo." (12)

As for the situation along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, it is not difficult to see how this scenario could play out. Pakistan has been provided with a convenient excuse to strictly enforce an indefinite closing of its border with Afghanistan. The Afghans fleeing the destruction of their homeland will be trapped between falling bombs and a closed border.

Forced to set up makeshift refugee camps on the Afghan side of the border, an enormous mass of humanity will be ravaged by starvation and disease. The potential loss of human life could be unimaginable. The weakest and most vulnerable of the refugees - which is to say, the children - will make up the majority of the victims.

Their blood will be on the hands of all the politicians, pundits and media flacks who cheerlead the illegal war being waged against the people of Afghanistan. Their legacy will be a new generation of 'terrorists' with a fully-earned hatred of American foreign policy.

UPDATE: Following the time-honored "when all else fails, blame it on the Commies" strategy, *Jane's* posted an article on November 28, 2001 entitled "Have Soviet-era Bio-Weapons Infected Afghan Refugees?" Revealed therein is the unreported fact that the disease is now running rampant along the Iranian border as well:

"Ominous news from Pakistan and Iran indicate that at best a viral pandemic may be brewing among Afghan refugees, at worst that former Soviet biological weapons have possibly made their first appearance.

" ... Ali-Safar Makaanali, head of Iran's Border Quarantines, has confirmed that Iranian health officials are also dealing with an outbreak of the virus, with 100 citizens having been infected. Iranian health authorities have established 40 quarantine bases on the border in an attempt to halt the spread of the disease. In addition, more than 100 mobile quarantine bases have been set up, and 39 hospitals have been prepared to cope with patients.

" ... Are the Iranian and Pakistani outbreaks an unfortunate coincidence or something more sinister?"

Good question. Some of us are still waiting for an answer.

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Cats, Dogs and 'Collateral Damage'

David McGowan
October 16, 2001

"There are not many witnesses to say what happened to Khorum village in eastern Afghanistan last Wednesday night; there are not many survivors. One thing is clear. The simple collection of mud huts and livestock pens in this village, around 38 miles from the east Afghanistan town of Jalalabad, was hit by a devastating firestorm."

Zeeshan Haider "Stench of Death in a Flattened Village," *The Guardian*, October 15, 2001

(The village referred to throughout this article is variously spelled Khorum, Kadam, Karam, and Koram. It is unclear which is the correct spelling.)

"One week after United States-led forces began bombarding Afghanistan, disturbing evidence is emerging of unacceptably high civilian casualties and ill-defined military and political objectives. Afghans reaching the Pakistani city of Peshawar 60 kilometres from the border said the bombing on Friday of Kadam, a small rural community in Surkh Rud district near the eastern city of Jalalabad, had killed scores, possibly hundreds of civilians." (1)

So said the *Sydney Morning Herald* on Monday, October 15. This was just one of many reports filed Sunday and Monday concerning the destruction of an Afghan village. The first of these reports were based on the eyewitness accounts of the survivors of the attack, some seriously wounded, who fled into neighboring Pakistan.

A report in the *Guardian* began: "Serious blunders by American warplanes may have killed at least 100 civilians in Afghanistan, according to eye-witness accounts obtained by the *Observer*. Two U.S. jets, they said, had bombed a village in eastern Afghanistan, killing more than 100 people." (2) According to one witness cited, the jets circled back twice to unload additional ordnance on the village.

The *Guardian* also noted that while "Western politicians have been quick to dismiss the claims as propaganda ... apparent confirmation of serious casualties among non-combatants is beginning to emerge. If the evidence is accurate, an attack on Karam village, 18 miles west of Jalalabad, last Thursday was the most lethal blunder yet by Allied forces." (2)

An article in the *Independent* held that Karam was just one of several villages to be targeted: "Something went terribly wrong at the end of the week. In conversations with refugees, a string of names come up again and again: Darunta, Karam, Torghar, Farmada - insignificant villages where, according to consistent accounts by eyewitnesses, as well as those of the Taliban propaganda machine, hundreds of civilians were killed." (3)

Among the refugees that *Independent* reporter Richard Parry spoke to, he found that

"many have seen at first hand the devastating effects which the attacks have begun to have on civilians. In hospitals, refugee camps and in the homes of friends, they describe how it feels to find yourself directly below one of the most technologically sophisticated bombing campaigns in history." (3)

U.S. officials were quick to deny civilian casualties and denounce the witness accounts as propaganda. Taliban officials countered by allowing Western reporters into the country to view the carnage at Karam first-hand. The journalists, skeptical of what they assumed would be a staged scene, filed reports that revealed their shock and revulsion at what they encountered.

A reporter for *The Times* described the scene at a nearby hospital: "In a gloomy Jalalabad hospital ward Ahmed Zai clings to his one-year-old son as they lie on a dirty sheet. Both have shrapnel wounds ... Across the crowded ward three-year-old Rahmed cries for his mother. Bandages cover his head, arm and legs. Blood is oozing through ... Doctors tell us that both of his parents are dead ... Along with twenty-five others in this hospital Ahmed and Rahmed were in the village of Koram." (4)

In the village itself, the reporters were met with harrowing scenes of carnage and human suffering. First, however, their Taliban escorts had to subdue the wrathful villagers: "As we approached Koram, climbing a rocky hillside, the villagers erupted in fury, charging down the hill with shovels in hand. We had experienced orchestrated protests during our drive from the Pakistan border, but this was altogether different." (4)

An *Associated Press* writer made a similar observation: "Waving shovels and sticks, enraged villagers surged toward foreign journalists brought here Sunday by Afghanistan's ruling Taliban militia to see what officials say was the devastation of a U.S. air attack. 'They are coming to kill us! They are coming for information, to tell the planes where to bomb!' angry and terrified villagers shouted as they charged the reporters." (5)

These were, mind you, ordinary Afghan villagers who - after just one week of terror bombing allegedly aimed at eliminating terrorism and keeping the Western world safe for democracy - were so enraged that they were prepared to violently attack the first Westerners they laid eyes on. I don't know about anyone else, but I'm feeling a whole lot safer already.

Ian Williams of *The Times* graphically described the village: "One man said that he was burying his wife bit by bit as he dug her out of the rubble. He put a severed leg into a plastic bag and dropped it into the hole that he had dug. The stench of rotten bodies was overwhelming in places. Dead cows and goats littered the hillside, as did chunks of metal, shrapnel from the bombs. Of around 40 stone houses more than half have been completely destroyed." (4)

Kathy Gannon of the *Associated Press* took in the scene as well: "Villagers pointed out other evidence of an attack: a bloodstained pillowcase by a house, bomb craters and what appeared to be a rotting human limb. Dozens of sheep and goat carcasses were strewn about the mud-hut village, and the air was thick with a rancid stench." (5)

Williams reported seeing "at least thirty fresh graves, villagers praying beside them." (4) Gannon watched as an "old man knelt by one grave, sobbing. He looked up, furiously, at journalists and their cameras and lobbed stones to drive the outsiders away." (5) Witnesses on the scene told the reporters that "more bodies were buried up in the mountains, taken there by residents as they fled the now mostly deserted community." (5)

One villager showed the visitors a piece of bomb shrapnel with English writing on it. His wife and all five of his kids had been killed by the bombs. Another villager demanded answers: "They are innocent people living here. There is no military base. What is it they are looking for in Afghanistan? Where is Osama bin Laden? He is not here. Why did they bomb us?" (5)

Williams ended his report with the following observation: "from the evidence we have seen Koram is no terrorist training camp or military base. There appears to have been a

horrible mistake." (4) Not according to the Pentagon and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who put forth the preposterous story that it was an ammunition dump near the village that had been bombed.

As the *Guardian* reported, Rumsfeld claimed that "US bombs had hit the opening to two nearby tunnels believed to be possible ammunition dumps, causing powerful secondary explosions. People living near the site may have been involved in storing and guarding the ammunition store." (6) The village itself, according to the Pentagon, was not actually bombed at all.

Despite the fact that reporters had seen and photographed bomb craters, and had seen at least one unexploded warhead, the Pentagon "denied there were bomb craters in the village." (6) Left completely unexplained were the bombed-out dwellings, the livestock carcasses strewn about, the abundance of shrapnel, and the scattered body parts.

Rumsfeld washed his hands of the affair with the following shameless lie: "There's no question that people who were in close proximity to these isolated ammunition dumps, who very likely were there for a good reason because they were a part of that activity, may very well have been casualties. They were not cooking cookies inside those tunnels." (6)

No, actually they weren't in any tunnels at all. Some were sleeping. Some had just been called to morning prayer by the village mullah. All were, by any reasonable interpretation of the evidence, civilians.

After reading these reports on Sunday evening - all from British and Australian publications - I decided to catch the 11:00 PM edition of *ABC News* to see what sort of spin the American media would put on these well-documented reports of civilian casualties. No mention was made of them.

They did though manage to squeeze in an important story about some other tragic victims whose plight had previously been shamefully ignored by all avenues of the media. The following exchange between the talking heads 'teased' the story:
Leslie Sykes: "Still ahead - the forgotten victims of September 11th."
Phillip Palmer: "Tonight, a party to raise money for pets who lost their owners. That is coming up."

I didn't wait up to get the details.

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Deconstructing a Bush-League Speech

*David McGowan
November 12, 2001*

Selected excerpts from Bush's November 8 speech in Atlanta, including portions of the original draft (in red italics) that didn't make the final cut.

Tonight, many thousands of children are tragically learning to live without one of their parents.

Soon it will be tens of thousands, and then hundreds of thousands, and then perhaps millions of children who will be learning to live without one or both of their parents. But that's only if we count the Afghani kids.

And the rest of us are learning to live in a world that seems very different than it was on September the 10th.

All of you will be learning to live in a world that looks very much like a police state. Most of you will also be learning to live in a state of denial about how overtly fascist the country has become. Some of you though will have difficulty learning that portion of the program. We have a name for you: "terrorists."

The moment the second plane hit the second building, when we knew it was a terrorist attack, many felt that our lives would never be the same.

My handlers wanted me to emphasize that we had no clue that anything unusual was underway prior to the second plane hitting the second tower. We actually knew that there was some serious shit going down long before that time. The fact that no less than four commercial airliners had been simultaneously hijacked and one of them crashed into New York City's most visible landmark provided pretty good clues that something might be afoot. Nevertheless, it wasn't until the second plane hit the second tower that my aides chose to interrupt my reading time to inform me that there might be a problem. I'm still pissed off about it too, because now I'll never know what happened to that goat.

We have gained new heroes, those who ran into burning buildings to save others: our police and our firefighters.

And just a few short days ago - when we sent Rudy G's Gestapo troops to show them how we deal with those in this country who choose to lawfully assemble to address legitimate grievances - we showed the level of contempt that we have for these heroes. As for the ones still buried in the rubble, we will be skiploading them into trucks to dump at the Fresh Kills

Landfill. As you can well imagine, we are having a good laugh about that at the White House.

(APPLAUSE)

We've seen that type of hate before, and the only possible response is to confront it and to defeat it.

This is the part of the speech where I make the obligatory comparison of our current 'enemy' to Adolf Hitler. My daddy did the same thing with Saddam Hussein, as many of you will recall. In truth though, the only thing that these guys have in common with Hitler is that their rise to power was financed partly by my family, just like the real Hitler's rise was.

(APPLAUSE)

This new enemy seeks to destroy our freedom and impose its views.

This is actually one of the truest statements that I will be making here this evening. What I won't be telling you though is that the new enemy is me and my cabinet.

We value education; the terrorists do not believe women should be educated, or should have health care, or should leave their homes.

Neither, for that matter, do any of the other groups who we are considering propping up as the new Afghani government, but we don't generally like to talk about that.

We value the right to speak our minds;

We may value it, but don't anybody think about trying to actually exercise it. Always keep in mind what my errand-boy Ari Fleischer said about watching what you say and do.

This enemy tries to hide behind a peaceful faith. But those who celebrate the murder of innocent men, women and children have no religion, have no conscience and have no mercy.

That is why I want you all to go out there and wave your flags and sing God Bless America while we continue to actively assist in an impending genocide of some seven-and-a-half million innocent civilians.

(APPLAUSE)

We wage a war to save civilization itself.

That, of course, assumes that we are defining 'civilization' as the right of the select few to exploit the resources and the people of this entire planet.

This is a different war from any our nation has ever faced, a war on many fronts, against terrorists who operate in more than 60 different countries. And this is a war that must be fought not only overseas, but also here at home.

For those who haven't figured it out yet, this is a war against all the people of the world, including all of you.

I recently spoke to high school students in Maryland and realized that for the first time ever these seniors will graduate in the midst of a war in our own country.

I also realized that, in a few years, a lot of them would likely be dead or missing limbs. Many others will likely develop some mysterious ailments as a result of exposure to all the toxic shit we are dumping in the areas where we will be sending in ground troops.

We have entered a new era, and this new era requires new responsibilities, both for the government and for our people.

Our responsibility will be to continue lying to you in the hopes that most of you will continue to support our illegal and unjustified military actions, and to continue doing our very best to scare you into surrendering your few remaining civil liberties. Your responsibility will be to continue being scared and to foolishly continue to trust us here in Washington.

The government has a responsibility to protect our citizens, and that starts with homeland security. The first attack against America came by plane, and we are now making our airports and airplanes safer. We have posted the National Guard in America's airports and placed undercover air marshals on many flights.

This is just a first step aimed at acclimating all of you to the constant presence of armed and uniformed military personnel intruding into your daily lives. And, by the way, don't make the mistake of thinking that all that airport security is ultimately aimed solely at keeping people out of the country.

Four Americans have now died from anthrax out of a total of 17 people who have been infected. The Postal Service has processed more than 30 billion pieces of mail since September the 11th, and so far we've identified three different letters that contained anthrax.

I can't do the math myself, but they tell me that that means that one in every ten billion pieces of mail that was processed during the outrageously overhyped Anthrax scare was tainted. Now I know that I'm not the sharpest knife in the drawer, but even I can figure out that the risk might have been somewhat misrepresented by our subservient media whores.

I'm proud of the way our health care and postal workers and the American people are responding with calm in the face of this deadly new threat.

I'm even more proud of the way our faithful servants in the press have obligingly and rather shamelessly whipped all of you into an Anthrax frenzy.

(APPLAUSE)

To coordinate our efforts, we have created the new Office of Homeland Security. Its director, my good friend and former Governor Tom Ridge, reports directly to me and works with all of our federal agencies, state and local governments and the private sector on a national strategy to strengthen our homeland protections.

I think you are going to like Tom. He's going to help coordinate the creation of a unified, nationwide, highly militarized police force that will operate largely in secrecy. It will look and function very much like the Gestapo. As all you patriotic Americans know, however, Nazi Germany's Gestapo was created for all the wrong reasons, while ours is being created for all the right reasons.

Our enemies have threatened other acts of terror. We take each threat seriously. And when we have evidence of credible threats, we will issue appropriate alerts.

We will continue to do our very best to scare the hell out of all of you and make you feel as vulnerable as we possibly can. Think of how happy you'll then be when we insist on 'protecting' you.

A terrorism alert is not a signal to stop your life. It is a call to be vigilant, to know that your government is on high alert and to add your eyes and ears to our efforts to find and stop those who want to do us harm.

If you've been paying close attention, the issuing of a terrorism alert should signal to you that more of your rights are about to get stripped away.

We are destroying training camps, disrupting communications and dismantling air defenses. We are now bombing Taliban front lines. We are deliberately and systematically hunting down these murderers and we will bring them to justice.

We are carpet bombing with B-52s and making liberal use of cluster bombs, fuel-air bombs and depleted uranium. We have decimated villages, scored direct hits on a hospital, a nursing home and a food distribution center, and have seriously damaged a dam. We have created an unconscionable refugee crisis and have effectively cut off food supplies to millions of starving Afghans. And we've hardly gotten started. Even if we knew where to find those we have branded as the 'murderers' - against whom, by the way, we have no real evidence - it would be impossible to hunt them down from a jet flying at 40,000 feet.

(APPLAUSE)

Throughout this battle, we adhere to our values. Unlike our enemy, we respect life. We do not target innocent civilians.

And if you believe that, then I guess you haven't been paying attention to the situation that we've created in Iraq over the last decade.

We care for the innocent people of Afghanistan, so we continue to provide humanitarian aid, even while their government tries to steal the food we send.

We tell this story so often that it is rather amazing that anyone believes it anymore. This is the standard lie that we use to explain why offering any meaningful humanitarian assistance would be pointless. That is so that all of you don't needlessly burden yourselves with feelings of guilt over the humanitarian crises that we routinely create. In this conflict, we have added a new twist to the purported humanitarian aid being offered – cleverly disguising the food packets to blend in with the cluster bomblets that are already beginning to litter the Afghani landscape.



Food or cluster bomb?

When the terrorists and their supporters are gone, the people of Afghanistan will say with the rest of the world, "Good riddance."

If everything goes as planned, the people of Afghanistan aren't going to be saying much of anything. As a matter of fact, we aren't sure that there will be any people in Afghanistan.

(APPLAUSE)

We are at the beginning of our efforts in Afghanistan, and Afghanistan is only the beginning of our efforts in the world. No group or nation should mistake Americans' (sic) intentions.

Lest anyone has, let me state it as clearly as possible: our intent is specifically to bomb the bejesus out of any and all pockets of resistance to our ultimate goal of global hegemony.

I recently received a letter from a fourth grade girl that seemed to say it all.

Finally my staffers gave me something to read that I can actually understand, unlike all those briefings they are always handing me. Now this person actually makes sense. I'm going to see if I can create a cabinet position for her, so that I have someone on my educational level that I can confer with.

Countless Americans gave blood in the aftermath of the attacks.

Countless more will give blood before this is all over, although it won't necessarily be voluntarily.

Americans have a lot to offer, so I've created a task force to develop additional ways people can get directly involved in this war effort, by making our homes and neighborhoods and schools and workplaces safer.

We want you all to start spying on each other. And please don't hesitate to report anything that you perceive to be 'anti-American' activity, whether the suspect be a neighbor, a co-worker, or even a family member. We already have your employers and your bankers spying on you for us, but we could really use some help from each and every one of you.

Too many have the wrong idea of Americans as shallow, materialist consumers who care only about getting rich or getting ahead.

I wonder if that has anything to do with the fact that that is the precise set of values that is pitched to Americans by our schools and other social institutions, through our media - both 'news' and 'entertainment,' though how you tell the difference is beyond me - and through the icons of popular culture?

Our government has the responsibility to put needless partisanship behind us and meet new challenges:

It is time now to do away with the transparent and rather silly pretense of having a two-party system.

I made some proposals to stimulate economic growth, which will create new jobs and make America less dependent on foreign oil.

That at least is the spin that we have tried to put on our alleged 'stimulus package.' In truth, what we are planning to do is hand out massive tax breaks to the wealthiest individuals and corporations in the country. We don't really expect that this will create any new jobs, but it will further consolidate wealth and power into the hands of an elite few. Meanwhile, jobs will continue to disappear more quickly and more frequently than Dick Cheney.

(APPLAUSE)

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*The center for an
informed America*

On Courage and Patriotism

*David McGowan
December 27, 2001*

Americans of late like to think of themselves as a particularly brave and patriotic breed. But is that really an accurate assessment of the qualities that we, as citizens of this nation, have exhibited since September 11?

By "we," I am referring here to the purported 90% of Americans who think that George Bush is doing a dandy job of waging his 'War on Terrorism.' That, of course, assumes that the results of public opinion polls reported by the U.S. media are any more credible than the rest of the swill that the press tries to pass off as 'news.'

Although the actual percentage is likely considerably lower than 90%, there are without question a sizable number of Americans who have wholeheartedly lined up behind our intellectually challenged commander-in-chief in response to the 'terrorist' attacks. And that, as far as I can see, makes us not a nation of heroes, but a nation of cowards.

We are cowards because we have chosen to follow the path of least resistance – blindly accepting the blatant lies that Washington and the media have disseminated since the September 11 attacks. Following that course requires no independent thought and, more importantly, causes none of what psychologists like to call 'cognitive dissonance.'

Cognitive dissonance occurs when we are unable to integrate a new bit of information into our existing belief structure because the new information challenges or directly contradicts one of our most cherished beliefs. It can be the source of extreme psychological discomfort, for it can force us into the uncomfortable position of having to reevaluate some of our core beliefs about how the world operates and what roles are played by the various actors on the global stage.

It is, of course, far easier to simply discredit the source of the offending information, thereby making it a rather simple task to just toss out the new, incongruous facts and blithely proceed along in a Prozac-aided state of virtual consciousness.

For an American raised on a steady diet of propaganda painting the United States as a benevolent giant - a model to the world of those cherished principles of freedom, equality and justice - confronting evidence that tends to indicate that our esteemed leaders were directly complicit in the slaughter of some 3,000 native sons and daughters as a staged provocation to justify a long-planned war and mount a long-planned frontal assault on civil liberties ... now that's something that would likely evoke a considerable amount of cognitive dissonance.

How then to resolve the mental conflict? A simple task really ... just deny, deny, deny. Deny that the source of the information has any validity whatsoever. Denounce the bearer of the news as a propagandist for the 'enemy.' Better yet, deny yourself the opportunity to even

be exposed to the offending facts, pretending as though they weren't readily available to anyone with an Internet connection and the desire to seek out the truth.

And whatever else you do, don't ask any questions which might yield answers that you don't want to hear. Choose instead to look away, to shield your eyes from the true evil that surrounds you, lest you be forced to reevaluate your basic conception of what America really stands for.

Don't ask, for example, how it is that our intelligence community - far and away the largest and most insidious the world has ever seen - was so thoroughly caught with its pants down. And don't stop to ponder that there were in fact numerous warnings that were received and seemingly deliberately ignored - as has been reported in various avenues of the press, most recently by the *San Francisco Chronicle* (Philip Shenon "FBI Ignored Attack Warning: Flight Instructor Told Agency of Terror Suspect's Plan," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 22, 2001).

It is probably best that you also not ask why the nation with the world's most advanced air defense system, with fighter jets on constant alert capable of being scrambled to any sensitive location within the U.S. in minutes, failed to respond in any way throughout the entire time that the attacks were in progress - giving the impression that an order to 'stand down' had been issued at a very high level.

It would likewise be best to disregard and/or deny the validity of the numerous media reports documenting the extensive connections between the Bush family and the bin Laden family. Don't ask about Osama's brother helping to finance George, Jr.'s Arbusto Energy enterprise in Texas (and soon after dying in a private plane crash there), or about George, Sr.'s visits to the bin Laden complex in Saudi Arabia, or his close ties to the family through the Carlyle Group.

And pay no attention to those reports stating that Osama has long served as an asset of our CIA, doing America's bidding against the Soviets in Afghanistan in the 1980s, and later assisting in the recruiting, arming, funding and training of the KLA - whom our State Department can't seem to decide whether to classify as 'terrorists' or 'freedom fighters.' And definitely don't ask why it was that a CIA official visited with bin Laden in a Dubai hospital room in July of 2001, just weeks before the attacks and long after Osama was allegedly considered one of the world's most wanted fugitives.

Also avoid any questions concerning how the liars in Washington can claim that bin Laden has long been estranged from his family and yet simultaneously boast that our illustrious intelligence community has tapes of his private telephone calls to his mother. And, it should go without saying, don't spend any wasted time wondering how it is that while our spooks have the capability to covertly intercept his communications, they nevertheless failed to glean any hint of the alleged planning that bin Laden was doing in preparation for the attacks.

Don't ask how it is that - when imploding a building is such a highly technical process, requiring both extensive planning and knowledge gained through decades of experience to insure that the building is successfully reduced to rubble that all falls precisely into the structure's 'footprint,' that there are only a handful of companies qualified to perform this type of demolition work - a band of 'terrorists' was able to replicate this rather amazing feat not just once, but twice - and simply by having a commercial jet strike the two towers at essentially random points.



A building being professionally imploded

It would also be a good idea to hold off on any inquiries into why our alleged commander-in-chief chose to read to schoolchildren rather than address what had already developed into a full-scale national emergency. And don't ask why our illustrious vice-president, the elusive Dick Cheney, needs to operate in total secrecy, even while his wife works hand-in-hand with her husband's purported rival, Senator Joseph Lieberman, to crack down on political dissent on college and university campuses.

It is also best, so as not to disturb one's mental slumber, if you don't ask why it is that - when almost all of the alleged hijacking suspects were Saudi nationals trained in Germany and the United States - it is the largely defenseless population of Afghanistan that is under siege. Or how it is that a pilot supposedly trained in a third-rate puddle-jumping school was able to, according to eyewitnesses, masterfully perform a complex aeronautic maneuver just before crashing into the Pentagon.

And speaking of the Pentagon, other questions best left unasked include how it is that a plane known to have been hijacked can penetrate the world's most tightly controlled airspace without drawing any hint of anti-aircraft fire, and how it is that a surprise explosion and fire can take out a large portion of the military's nerve center without killing or injuring any military leaders of any consequence.

If confronted with evidence of massive insider trading in the days immediately preceding the attacks on America - trading that clearly indicated advance knowledge of the precise nature of the impending attacks - denounce the publication of such information as indicative of the 'liberal' bias of the media - even if the purveyor of the information was the unabashedly fascistic *Wall Street Journal*.

And, finally, don't ask why it is that even as our fearless leaders scramble about desperately attempting to fabricate evidence to justify the assault on the Afghan people *after the fact* - such as placing an obvious CIA plant, who appears to be the only foreign Taliban POW to miraculously survive the bloodbath at Jala-i-Qanghi prison, among the Taliban prisoners; or presenting a grainy, out-of-focus, and almost completely inaudible videotape of unknown origin as supposedly unimpeachable 'proof' of bin Laden's complicity - there still has not been to this day a single shred of verifiable evidence released to the American people that existed *before* the bombings began.

We shouldn't ask those sorts of questions because we very likely won't like the answers that we get (assuming that we could actually get any straight answers to such questions). And confronting the truth about America's role in the world, and about the true nature of the most fundamentally corrupt government on the face of the earth, requires something that is sadly lacking in this country - real courage.

So instead we choose to live in a state of deep denial, choosing not to rock our little boats - even as they are already rapidly taking on water - and choosing not to face up to the inescapable fact that the problems facing this country are too profound, and too deeply ingrained, to be fixed at the ballot box or through signing petitions or through endless letters written to our elected (and unelected) representatives.

The very real and very urgent problems that we collectively face, as a nation and as a people, did not arrive with the illegitimate Bush administration and won't leave with him when his term expires (assuming, that is, that he plans to leave at some point in the near future). America has been steadily devolving into an overt police state for quite some time now. We have maintained a permanent wartime economy for decades, engaging in illegal and grotesquely immoral acts of war against anyone who stands in the way of U.S. global hegemony.

The assault on civil liberties and human rights may well have been stepped-up a notch or two, but that is, as anyone who has been paying attention is surely aware, simply a natural progression of the policies of Bush's predecessors in the White House – as is the no-longer concealed attack on the rights of immigrants. The institution of an Orwellian surveillance state is also nothing new, but rather has been steadily progressing through several administrations.

The purported loosening of the restraints on the CIA and the FBI are really just a matter of openly acknowledging and codifying what has been U.S. policy since the inception of these abhorrent organizations. The CIA always has, and always will engage in assassinations, the recruitment of criminal elements, and domestic spying operations (not to mention drug trafficking, the violent overthrow of democratically elected governments, and various other nefarious pursuits).

It makes absolutely no difference whether the White House is occupied by an administration identifying itself as Republican or Democrat, or whether the majority party in Congress chooses to place either of those labels on itself – as was evidenced most recently when Senator Jeffords' much-ballyhooed 'defection' resulted in exactly no change in the agenda being pursued. Despite what the Washington propaganda mill would have you believe, it is not simply due to the fact that "everything changed" on September 11 that there has been an overwhelmingly 'bipartisan' consensus to enact the flurry of reactionary legislative measures that we have seen in the last few months.

The truth is that neither 'party' has any legitimacy, and neither of them speak for the people of this country, or even put much effort into pretending to. Our political leaders are merely actors (and not very good ones, in many cases) playing their assigned roles while doing the bidding of the wealthy and powerful. Your opinion means absolutely nothing. You are only allowed to go through the motions of trotting off to your assigned polling place every couple of years to cast your vote for either of the two designated candidates who have already met with the approval of the people whose opinion does matter.

Whether you opt to punch your ballot in the box marked "R" or the box marked "D" makes no difference whatsoever in the grand scheme of things. The policies pursued will be the same, though the propaganda used to sell them may differ slightly.

But we don't want to face up to any of that. Instead, we cowardly avert our eyes, striving not to recognize, or to pretend not to recognize, that the greatest impediment to true freedom, democracy and justice in this world is the United States government. By doing so, we condemn ourselves, our children, and all the people of the world, to the fascist tyranny of a global superpower run amok. To do otherwise, to seek a fundamental change in the American ship of state, is what requires true courage.

But what, you may ask, of our men and women in uniform? Surely they display bravery and courage, do they not? If so, it is certainly not by performing the duties that they have been trained to perform.

America has fought all of its recent wars almost exclusively from the air. Waging war, from 'our' side, means flying high-tech aircraft well beyond the reach of our overwhelmed enemies' defenses and opening the bomb-bay doors. Despite the frequent claims that our men and women have been put "in harm's way," it was claimed after Operation Desert Slaughter that soldiers serving in the Gulf had *less* chance of being injured or killed than their

counterparts stationed elsewhere.

Far more U.S. servicemen are in fact killed every year in training exercises than in armed conflict (though it seems likely that many of those listed as killed in so-called training accidents are actually killed engaging in covert military operations in areas of the world where the American people are not even aware that our troops are engaged).

It wasn't too long ago that waging war from the air was considered a cowardly and morally reprehensible tactic – condemned around the globe, most notably by our own leaders when the bombardment was being directed by the generals of Nazi Germany and Japan. Yet we are to believe that all of that has changed now, purportedly because we now have 'smart bombs,' so aerial warfare no longer means indiscriminately dumping explosive and incendiary devices on vast numbers of innocent civilians.

Nonsense. The only thing that has changed about aerial bombardment is the propaganda that accompanies it. Now we fly "sorties" to launch "surgical strikes" with "laser-guided" munitions that cause little or no "collateral damage." Just as we caused only limited collateral damage in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia - where collectively as many human lives were exterminated as in the Nazi concentration camps.

And just as we strove to minimize civilian casualties in Iraq – by deliberately creating conditions that can only be described as genocidal. The truth is that what we now like to call an "air campaign" is the same thing that it has always been – an effort to inflict death and suffering on a massive scale and break the will of a besieged population. It is a textbook example of the term "terrorist attack." And it is a cowardly way to wage war.

Bill Maher, the marginally talented comedian who fancies himself to be a political analyst, said as much on his television show. It was perhaps the first sign of intelligent life that Maher has exhibited, which is precisely why it almost cost him his job – until he cowardly tucked his tail between his legs and displayed the proper amount of contrition.

Such is the power of propaganda though that when an L.A. street gang performs a drive-by shooting - an inherently cowardly and inefficient means of retribution that invariably results in 'collateral damage' - the American people are appalled, yet when the U.S. military performs a fly-by shooting - an inherently cowardly and inefficient means of retribution that invariably results in 'collateral damage' - the American people applaud.

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Celluloid Heroes: Part I
or: You Can See All the Blood as You Walk Down Hollywood Boulevard
(With apologies to The Kinks)

David McGowan
January 20, 2002

“Radio and television are psychological warfare.”

Herbert Mullin, falsely accused and convicted Santa Cruz serial killer and the son of a highly-decorated WWII Army Captain

I couldn't help noticing that *Black Hawk Down* has now gone into general release. When I first heard about this film, I assumed that it would be a shameless glorification of a reprehensible, imperialist, oil-driven U.S. military operation that was itself shamelessly glorified as a humanitarian mission to feed the hungry.

But I was wrong.

As it turns out, the movie is much more than that. It is also, for instance, a shameless glorification of a convicted child rapist and sodomizer. And, lest we forget, it is one of the most obvious pieces of government-sanctioned, pro-war propaganda to come out of Hollywood since you know, I think we may have to go all the way back to *Behind Enemy Lines* on this one.

But at least that film didn't romanticize the military exploits of a child molester. For the record, the 'hero' of *Black Hawk Down*, Ranger John Grimes, was given a deceptive name-change by the filmmakers following a request from the Pentagon's PR people. It seems the Ranger's real name was John Stebbins – who is currently serving a 30-year-sentence for an attack on a child under the age of 12. Stebbins' ex-wife told the *New York Post*: "They are going to make millions off this film in which my ex-husband is portrayed as an All-American hero when the truth is he is not." (1)

He sure looks like one up there on the silver screen though. How could he not be when he is being brought to screen-life by Hollywood hunk Ewan McGregor? Far be it from me to suggest that the larger-than-life hero up there is actually a convicted pedophile. That would be like, say, suggesting that the hero played by Brad Pitt in that wretched movie about Tibet was actually a Nazi seeking 'proof' of Aryan supremacy.

Of course, using the magic of Hollywood to transform repellent cultural and historical figures into screen heroes is standard operating procedure in Tinseltown. It is something that the film industry really excels at. We are talking here, after all, about an industry that recently gave no less an appalling figure than the Marquis de Sade a Hollywood makeover.

But the point that I started to make before getting sidetracked is that the repugnant piece of celluloid known as *Black Hawk Down* is a painfully transparent piece of propaganda – its

release coming precisely at a time when the Bush team is beginning to drop broad hints that Somalia could be very highly-placed on the list of nations about to suffer from Sudden Aerial Bombardment Syndrome – all in the name of fighting terrorism, of course.

Expansion of the war into Somalia could prove to be a tough sell with the American people though. Despite being conditioned and encouraged to have famously short memories, there is always the danger that some of us might remember those graphic images of a Special Forces operative being drug through the streets of Mogadishu. Good thing then for the Washington crowd that this film came along at such an opportune time – and amid a clamor of cravenly gushing reviews.

What better way to sell a war than on the nation's theater screens? According to an article in the *Online Journal*, "Many who have seen the film report leaving the theater feeling angry, itching to 'kick some ass.'" (2) Nothing like some emotionally-charged propaganda to fire up the people for a war of 'revenge' against a nation of people depicted as barbarians.

But wait a minute, you say. This film can't be *deliberate* propaganda. Production on this movie had to have begun long before September 11, long before there was a 'War on Terrorism.' The timing of the movie must then be just a bizarre and fortuitous coincidence – just like the timing of all the other war and 'spy' films flooding the nation's theaters is just a coincidence.

The release of the aforementioned *Behind Enemy Lines*, just as real-life Special Forces operatives were being sent behind 'enemy' lines, was surely just a coincidence. Likewise for *Spy Games* and, so as not to leave out the little ones, *Spy Kids*. And *Collateral Damage* (Ahhnuld takes on the terrorists), *We Were Soldiers* (Mel Gibson helps rewrite the Vietnam War), *Hart's War* (Bruce Willis helps rewrite WWII), *The Farm* (aka the CIA's training center in Langley, Virginia), *Bad Company* (more of the same), *Spy Kids 2*, *The Accidental Spy*, *I Spy*, and the further adventures of fictional 'spies' James Bond and Jack Ryan.

And it is obviously just a coincidence that the television networks are quickly filling timeslots with spies as well, having premiered no less than three new series glorifying and romanticizing the exploits of the CIA just weeks after what was purportedly the most massive intelligence 'failure' in U.S. history.

We know that this was a coincidence because these new series were obviously 'in the can' long before 'the agency,' as CBS refers to it, had any inkling that it would be thrust into the limelight in September as it suddenly earned a much more visible role in formulating U.S. foreign and military policy, and a much larger budget.

As a brief aside, I just realized that I wrote "U.S. foreign and military policy" as though those were two separate and distinct concepts. Sorry. I have no idea what the hell I was thinking.

Anyway, the point here is that we know that the CIA's crack counterterrorism experts had no hint of the impending attacks because if they did they would have heroically risen to the task of saving the lives of the doomed inhabitants of the World Trade Center towers, just like they do every week on TV.

And that, of course, didn't happen.

So it had to be just uncanny timing that brought these new shows to America's television screens at the precise time that the much-maligned CIA was desperately in need of something to burnish its image.

And in a not-so-shocking development, the CIA is now openly participating in the crafting of its image for both the big and small screens. This is in stark contrast to the old days, when the intelligence community *covertly* participated in crafting its image – and the images of just about everything else, for that matter. Like the Hollywood crowd is fond of saying, it is the *agents* who wield the real power in Tinseltown.

With military and intelligence types overrunning both the big and small screens, some might be tempted to ponder whether there isn't a coordinated psychological warfare campaign

being waged against the American people to condition them to support a serious expansion of the 'War on Terrorism.' In retrospect, some skeptics in the crowd might even wonder whether the country hasn't been being primed for a major war for quite some time.

We have been, after all, bombarded with Steven Spielberg's masterful work of flag-waving war-glorification we all know and love as *Saving Private Ryan*. Some have noted, by the way, that Spielberg's films are structured to resemble nothing so much as Nazi propaganda films of the 1930s. Not unlike, for example, the films of Leni Riefenstahl – the master propagandist for the Reich who gave the world *Triumph of the Will*. If you aren't familiar with Riefenstahl, you will be soon: she's about to get a Hollywood makeover courtesy of actress/director Jodie Foster.

But that's beside the point ... sort of.

We also had to endure that wretched bit of historical revisionism known as *Pearl Harbor*, which was made by the very same Jerry Bruckheimer who is now offering us *Black Hawk Down*. Before *Pearl Harbor*, he gave us *Enemy of the State* and a godawful cable television series by the name of *Soldier of Fortune, Inc.*

One of Bruckheimer's earlier works was the feature-length recruiting film, *Top Gun*, that was released not long before the 1990s dawned as the decade in which it would become a rather routine practice for America's 'top gun' pilots to bomb the piss out of various defenseless nations that are selfishly hoarding their oil reserves.

In those days, Bruckheimer was working with ~~co-propagandist~~ co-producer Don Simpson – who opted out of the partnership when he was found dead in his home, allegedly the victim of a drug overdose or of natural causes, depending on who is telling the story. Simpson's personal physician and apparent drug supplier had likewise been found dead, in Simpson's poolhouse, and likewise was said to be the victim of a drug overdose. Shit happens.

In Hollywood, shit happens *all the time*. Since shortly after its emergence circa 1915 as the entertainment capital of the world, Hollywood's streets have been littered with the bodies of those who have died under, shall we say, questionable circumstances.

In September of 1920, Olive Thomas - a beautiful and very young actress with everything to live for - purportedly killed herself by overdosing on, of all things, mercury. One year later, actress Virginia Rappe turned up dead at a party hosted by silent film star Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle. In February of the next year, 1922, producer William Desmond Taylor - a former British military officer whose life is shrouded in mystery to this day - was found shot to death.

In 1923, matinee idol Wally Reid was found dead in a padded cell at the mental hospital to which he had been confined. Reid was just thirty years old. His death was attributed to his morphine addiction, though how he would have fed that habit in a mental hospital remains a mystery. His widow then starred in an anti-drug film that she had lobbied for. The film was produced by Thomas Ince – a partner of D.W. Griffith, who gave the Ku Klux Klan a rather notorious Hollywood makeover in *Birth of a Nation*. Ince caught a bullet to the head in November of 1924 while attending a private party aboard William Randolph Hearst's yacht (though it was claimed that Ince died of natural causes, a story propagated primarily by Hearst's own newspapers).

And so began a tradition of unsolved and/or covered-up deaths that plagues Hollywood to this day. And the funny thing is that if you scratch beneath the surface of virtually any of these untimely deaths, you find the same cast of characters that you find lurking about the fringes of any self-respecting political 'conspiracy theory' – namely Mafioso, native and imported fascists, drug traffickers, and intelligence operatives.

As another brief aside, I just realized that I wrote "Mafioso, native and imported fascists, drug traffickers, *and* intelligence operatives," which is kind of like saying "Larry, Curly, Moe, *and* the Three Stooges."

The bodies continue to pile up in Hollywood to this day. Recent additions include:

Robert Blake's wife, who acquired some unwanted bullet holes in her head; William Shatner's wife, who ... uhhh ... drowned ("we've got you covered, Captain"); singer Aaliyah, whose plane - flown by a Florida-trained pilot with drug connections - went down because it was reportedly overweight, despite the fact that much of the band's equipment was reportedly left behind ("can we move some of this equipment out of here? - we have to make room for all these drugs"); and comedian Phil Hartman, whose shooting death was covered up with a murder/suicide story that had more holes in it than an Al Queda tunnel complex.

But here I have digressed at some length.

The point I was trying to make is that a psywar campaign has been in effect for quite some time now to condition the American people for what has been occasionally billed as World War III. The operative strategy has been to romanticize and glorify World War II, creating a kind of perverse wartime nostalgia. Hence we have seen the likes of *Pearl Harbor* on the big screen, *Band of Brothers* on the small screen, and literary masterpieces like *The Greatest Generation* in the bookstores.

And those works of 'art' are just the tip of the psywar iceberg. The media has become so besotted with images of heroic military and law enforcement personnel that the *World Socialist Web Site* recently felt compelled to commend an otherwise forgettable film simply because: "its protagonists are not generals or admirals, Navy Seals, Green Berets, marine commandos, FBI or CIA agents, state troopers or municipal police officers, sheriffs or deputy sheriffs, prison wardens or guards, secret service or Treasury agents, customs inspectors, immigration investigators, federal marshals, judges, bailiffs, parole or probation officers, Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms inspectors, Internal Revenue criminal investigators, Fish and Wildlife Service special agents, or any other fictional representatives of law enforcement."

They seem to have left out federal prosecutors, district attorneys, judge advocate generals, Supreme Court justices, U.S. embassy personnel, White House staffers and well, I think you get the idea.

As for the spy trade, there have historically been two primary representations of intelligence operatives in our ~~propaganda~~ entertainment media, both of them grotesquely disinformational and at least one of them crafted by the spooks themselves. That would be the notion of the intelligence operative as a dashing, cultured, romantic hero. The prototype for this version of the fictional spy was largely provided by Ian Fleming, creator of the James Bond character.

Fleming was a British intelligence operative during (and after) World War II, when he worked closely with Nazi 'defector' Rudolph Hess and a rather notorious character named Aleister Crowley – a flamboyant occultist, British and probable U.S. intelligence operative, and avid German and Nazi propagandist during World Wars I and II. Fleming's work is now being carried on by the likes of Tom Clancy, a 'former' Naval Intelligence asset and good friend of George Bush.

The other predominant image of the intelligence community that has permeated the media is that of 'the gang that couldn't shoot straight' – the spy as a well-intentioned, bumbling fool. On the big screen, the *Pink Panther* films established the model for this archetype, along with such television series as *Get Smart*, which was co-created by Buck Henry. Henry also was credited with the screenplay for the film *Day of the Dolphin* – a blatantly disinformational look at the work of MK-ULTRA operative John Lilly.

Assisting Henry on creating *Get Smart*, by the way, was Mel Brooks, whose most recent endeavor was adapting for the Broadway stage his film *The Producers* – an offensive piece of work that trivializes the crimes of the Third Reich and casts Herr Hitler as a cartoonish character. Strangely enough, Brooks chose to stage the gala premier of his play on April 20, 2001 – the birthday of its protagonist.

Brooks wasn't the first to present a buffoonish screen image of Hitler. Charlie Chaplin did it far earlier – back in 1940 when *The Great Dictator* was released just after the Nazi

invasion of the Soviet Union. The funny thing was though that Charlie pretty much wore the same makeup to play the *Fuhrer* that he had been wearing for the previous twenty years.

Chaplin's toothbrush-mustachioed 'Little Tramp' character was created and began gracing the nation's silent movie screens just as the similarly adorned Adolf Hitler began his climb to power in Germany's fledgling Nazi Party following World War I (after, it should probably be noted, spending some time in the Pasewalk Sanitarium). By the time the real Hitler stepped onto the world stage, therefore, the American people were predisposed to view the silly-looking character as little more than a joke.

Coincidence? Probably so, but I thought I'd throw it out there anyway – along with the fact that the two men were born just hours apart: Chaplin on April 18, 1889 and Hitler on April 20, 1889. That means that actually, I have no idea what the hell that means, but it seems like it should mean something.

Chaplin, by the way, who shared with Ranger Stebbins a well-known appetite for underage girls, was among the elite guests aboard Hearst's yacht the night Ince was killed, may have been present at the party of his friend Fatty Arbuckle that ended in the death of Virginia Rappe, and was the guest of honor at a 1972 party at which Oscar Levant made his last public appearance before being discovered dead.

Though this warning may be a little belated, I would strongly caution everyone out there against attending any parties where Chaplin is on the guest list.

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Celluloid Heroes: Part II ***or: The Tangled Web of Charlie Manson***

David McGowan
February 10, 2002

“[In Hollywood], everyone's a producer or a hit man.”

Douglas Clark, convicted Sunset Strip serial killer and the son of a Naval Intelligence operative

“I don't know if you guys have ever in your entire life shot anybody, but it's really fun to do.”

Former child actor Carol Bundy, Clark's convicted accomplice, speaking to the police

It has frequently been said that if you scratch just beneath the glossy and oh-so-glamorous exterior of the Hollywood dream factory, you will find the dark and ugly reality that lurks just beneath the surface. But just how dark and ugly is that reality?

There is certainly no shortage of recurrent weirdness that passes for business-as-usual in the land of make-believe that we like to call Hollywood. For such a small and tight-knit community, the Hollywood gang has generated more than its fair share of scandal and sleaze over the better part of the last century.

Is that merely because, in our celebrity-obsessed culture, every misstep of the entertainment community is open to such intense scrutiny? Would we find the same skeletons in the closets of any other group in the country that was subjected to such unabashed media and public voyeurism? Is Hollywood merely a microcosm of America itself, illuminated by the harsh glare of the stage lights?

If so, then it is truly a strange and scary world that we live in. Consider, if you will, just a few recent examples of Tinseltown weirdness:

- Actress Margot Kidder, missing for a week, surfaces in the bushes of a stranger's yard with her head shaved and a few of her teeth conspicuously absent.
- Actress Anne Heche similarly goes missing, only to show up at the door of a stranger in the middle of nowhere babbling about being beamed up to the mothership.
- Actor/comedian Martin Lawrence decides to stop traffic one day on busy Ventura Boulevard by wandering into the street, waving a gun and shouting incoherently.
- Actor Robert Downey, Jr. finds himself sleeping in the bed of a neighbor, with no idea of how he got there.

- Dr. Haing S. Ngor, who purportedly survived the killing fields of Cambodia before starring in Hollywood's version of events there, doesn't survive the streets of Hollywood; he is gunned down in February of 1996.
- Actor Jack Nicholson decides to blow off some steam by attacking the vehicle of another motorist with a golf club.
- Someone 'falls' to their death from the apartment of actor James Caan.
- Comic actor Eddie Murphy is arrested in the company of a transsexual prostitute. He/she dies a violent death shortly afterwards, though the press doesn't pay much attention.
- Actor Hugh Grant is arrested while being serviced by Hollywood prostitute "Divine" Brown. Brown's pimp subsequently surfaces in the company of a neo-Nazi singer who claims he was offered money by Courtney Love to kill Kurt Cobain. The would-be assassin turns up dead soon after telling this story to filmmaker Nick Broomfield.
- Actor Brian Keith, the former star of television's *Family Affair*, is found with a fatal bullet wound in his head on June 24, 1997. His death, ruled a suicide, continues a long tradition of Hollywood notables allegedly shooting themselves in the head. Included on that list are Herve "Tattoo" Villechaize (September 4, 1993), Del Shannon (December 8, 1990), Jon-Erik Hexum (October 12, 1984), Freddie "Chico" Prinze (January 29, 1977), Pete Duel (December 31, 1971), and George "Superman" Reeves (July 1, 1959).
- On June 2, 1996, the 35th anniversary of her grandfather Ernest's alleged suicide, Margaux Hemingway joins the list of Hollywood personalities whose deaths are attributed to drug overdoses. Margaux is the fifth member of her family to have their deaths ruled as suicides. River Phoenix's death on Halloween, 1993, outside of Johnny Depp's Viper Room, is also attributed to an overdose.

Nothing unusual about any of that, I suppose. Looking further back over the sordid history of Hollywood, consider also these examples of unexplained weirdness (and these examples are, it should be noted, just the tip of a very large iceberg):

- At Marlon Brando's Los Angeles estate, his son Christian shoots and kills sister Cheyenne's significant other, Dag Drollet, in May of 1990. Christian and his father claim that the shot was fired accidentally during a struggle for the gun. There is no sign of a struggle, and Drollet is found in a sitting position with a cigarette lighter and the remote control for the TV still in his hands. Attorney Robert Shapiro, who also represented Robert Evans in the *Cotton Club* murder case, cops a plea that results in Brando serving just five years. By that time, Cheyenne is dead, allegedly a suicide victim. Christian is later considered as a husband by Bonnie Lee Bakley, before she decides to marry Robert Blake. Five months later, Bakley is dead.
- Actors and actresses like Clara "It Girl" Bow, Frances Farmer, and the aforementioned Oscar Levant and Wallace Reid find themselves forcibly confined to mental hospitals. Farmer later tells of being beaten, raped, locked in a cage, and administered electroshock torture (oops ... I meant to say electroshock therapy).
- Mob enforcer Johnny Stompanato is found stabbed to death in the home of actress Lana Turner. Turner's young daughter takes the rap, though she doesn't appear to be physically capable of committing the crime.
- Actress Natalie Wood goes missing in the middle of the night from a yacht while in the company of actors Robert Wagner and Christopher Walken. She subsequently is found floating in the Pacific Ocean. Witnesses later claim that she had been in a motel room with Walken on Catalina Island.

- Aspiring actress Elizabeth "The Black Dahlia" Short is found literally cut in half, with her mutilated remains left on display, on January 15, 1947.
- People close to actress Sarah Miles develop a knack for committing suicide. There is the roommate who jumps out of the window of their shared apartment. There is the ex-gardener who owes Miles money and decides to gas himself. And of course there is the business manager who is discovered dead in Sarah's motel room and declared to be the victim of a drug overdose – though there is reportedly blood on his face and on the bed in which he is found. Miles has purportedly spent the night in the room of her co-star at the time: Burt Reynolds.
- Actress Thelma "Hot Toddy" Todd turns up dead in her car, allegedly the victim of suicide by means of carbon monoxide poisoning. Blood on her face, a cut lip and a dislodged tooth indicate that she was beaten senseless prior to her uhhh suicide. Todd had at one time been the wife of Pat DiCicco, one of "Lucky" Luciano's top lieutenants.
- Three years after Todd's death, popular comedian Ted Healy - who had had a fling with Thelma - is beaten to death. Though the details of his death were never reported, it has been fairly common knowledge in Hollywood circles for decades that Healy was beaten by DiCicco and actor Wallace Beery. Present at the time of the beating is Albert "Cubby" Broccoli – first cousin of DiCicco, friend of Howard Hughes, and one-time agent for Lana Turner. Broccoli goes on to produce the James Bond films, penned by British intelligence asset Ian Fleming. Assisting in covering up the murder of Healy is Shemp Howard of the Three Stooges, whose careers were launched by Healy.
- Comedian/actor John Belushi is found dead in his room in a West Hollywood hotel in March of 1982. He is said to be yet another victim of a drug overdose. His last known visitors, on the night of his death, are Robert DeNiro and Robin Williams. The story of his death, and tragically short life, is then told in a book by former Office of Naval Intelligence 'briefer' Bob Woodward.
- A number of the people involved with the movie *Rebel Without a Cause* die mysterious deaths at young ages – including stars James Dean, Natalie Wood, Sal Mineo (who is stabbed to death outside of his apartment on November 12, 1976) and Nick Reid (who is found dead of mysterious causes on February 7, 1968).
- Silent film legend Ramon Navarro is found dead in his home on Halloween day, 1968. He has been brutally tortured and murdered in what appears for all the world to be a ritual homicide. Two brothers, both young male prostitutes, are charged with the crime.
- Actor Bob Crane is murdered and it subsequently emerges that he had a secret life that centered around a passion for hardcore, homemade porno films.

Nothing unusual about any of that either, I suppose. But consider the web spun by the man known as Charles Milles Manson. Now this is where we really cut to the core of the dark underbelly of Hollywood. Join me then, if you will, as we embark on a journey that I like to call "Seven Degrees of Charlie Manson."

Before doing so, allow me to introduce a few members of the stellar cast of this strange and twisted tale:

- Sharon Tate - the most famous of the Manson victims, and the daughter of Colonel Paul Tate, U.S. Army Intelligence. Tate was killed on August 9, 1969, along with Abigail Folger, Steven Parent, Jay Sebring, and Voytek Frykowski.
- Kenneth Anger - former child-star turned underground filmmaker, and the son of a 'military-industrial complex' engineer who developed machine-guns for Kellogg during WWII and later worked for Douglas Aircraft.

- Judy Garland - child actor and singer who was kept drugged on a daily basis from about the age of five, first by her mother, and then by the studios. Garland was found dead on the summer solstice of 1969, just seven weeks before the Tate/LaBianca murders.
- John Phillips - musician/composer who founded the singing group The Mamas and The Papas and who was born in a military hospital, the son of a career Marine officer. John later attended the U.S. Naval Academy.
- Roy Radin - theatrical producer who specialized in staging vaudeville revival shows. Radin was working with Robert Evans to produce *The Cotton Club* when he was shot some twenty-seven times in the head in 1983. Radin began his career while still a teenager by staging shows in Masonic temples.
- The Hell's Angels - the most well-known of the biker gangs that arose after WWII due to the efforts of returning OSS and military officers. The Angels were led by Ralph "Sonny" Barger, reportedly an informant for the Oakland Police Department who was also on the payroll of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.
- Jayne Mansfield - actress/sex symbol who was decapitated, allegedly in a car accident, on June 29, 1967. According to Jayne's daughter, Mansfield's parties featured the rich and famous getting naked and filming themselves. Tate and husband Roman Polanski were reportedly the producers and collectors of 'fame porn' as well.
- Robert F. Kennedy - U.S. Senator and presidential candidate who was assassinated in Hollywood on June 5, 1968. Kennedy was allegedly shot from point-blank range behind his right ear by Sirhan Sirhan, who was standing several yards in front of and to the left of the candidate. Like I said, shit happens.

Without further ado, we begin this journey - for no particular reason - with the aforementioned Phil Hartman, who was a highschool friend of Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme, who later became a disciple of Charlie Manson, a jailhouse correspondent of John Hinckley, and the attempted assassin of President Gerald Ford, who was once a roommate of modeling entrepreneur Harry Conover, whose wife was the infamous Candy Jones, who was 'treated' by CIA-linked hypnotist William Jennings Bryan, who also 'treated' the purported Boston Strangler, Albert DeSalvo, whose name was written repetitively throughout the diaries of Sirhan Sirhan, who was also 'treated' by Bryan, who served as the technical director on *The Manchurian Candidate*, which was directed by John Frankenheimer, at whose beach house a dinner was held on June 5, 1968 whose attendees included "Mama" Cass Elliot, Roman Polanski, and Sharon Tate, who was killed just over a year later by followers of Charlie Manson, whose music was recorded by Doris Day's son, music producer Terry Melcher, who lived with girlfriend Candace Bergen at 10050 Cielo Drive the year before it became a slaughterhouse after being rented by Polanski, who initially was slated to pen the screenplay for *Day of the Dolphin*, which purported to tell the story of Dr. John Lilly, who was a friend of Timothy Leary, whose Mellon family-owned Millbrook estate was frequently visited by Dr. Max "Feelgood" Jacobson, who once 'treated' Judy Garland and who served as the personal physician of John Kennedy, whose assassination prompted the shelving of the film *The Manchurian Candidate* by its star, Frank Sinatra, who was a frequent companion of fellow 'Brat Packer' Sammy Davis, Jr., who was an acknowledged member of Anton LaVey's Church of Satan, from where Manson recruited killers Bobby "Cupid" Beausoleil and Susan "Sexy Sadie" Atkins, who confessed to her cellmates that she had stabbed to death actress Sharon Tate, who was inducted into witchcraft on the set of the Polanski-directed film *The Fearless Vampire Killers* by Alexander "King of the Witches" Saunders, who received 'training' as a child from Aleister Crowley, whose followers included Anton LaVey and fellow Church of Satan member Kenneth Anger, who was the roommate (and probable lover) of Family member Bobby Beausoleil, who once appeared in an underground film titled *Mondo Hollywood*, which also featured hairdresser and Manson victim Jay Sebring, who was a former lover of Sharon Tate, who was a friend of a wealthy widow named Charlene Caffritz,

who played host to - and filmed the exploits of - Charlie and some of his girls, who also lived for a time with Beach Boy Dennis Wilson, who recorded a song penned by Charlie, who was an occasional member of the entourage of Mama Cass, who was listed as a defense witness for Charlie's trial (but never called), as was her Mamas and the Papas band-mate John Phillips, who was close to Polanski, Tate, Melcher, Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Cass Elliot, and film producer Robert Evans, who was working with - and very likely contracted the execution killing of - Roy Radin, whose assistant was Michael DeVinko *aka* Mickie DeVinko *aka* Mickie Deans, who married - just a few months before her untimely death - *Wizard of Oz* star Judy Garland, who as a teen was flooded with phone messages and telegrams by admirer Oscar Levant, whose dead body was found by Candace Bergen, who - as a photojournalist for *Life* magazine - covered the preempted presidential campaign of Robert Kennedy, who was romantically linked to Marilyn Monroe, who was also linked to Anton LaVey, who appeared in Kenneth Anger's *Invocation of My Demon Brother* (released in August of 1969) along with Bobby Beausoleil, Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, who was a guest at the 1968 London wedding of Sharon Tate to Roman Polanski, who - during a nude photo shoot - molested a thirteen-year-old girl at the home of Jack Nicholson, who was a friend of Cass Elliot, as were Robert Evans and Manson victims Jay Sebring, Voytek Frykowski and Abigail Folger, who provided funding for the Himalayan Academy, which Kenneth Anger helped form with Timothy Leary, who was at the side of the stage at the 1969 Altamont concert where - while the Rolling Stones played the Process Church-inspired *Sympathy for the Devil** - a fan was killed on film by the Hell's Angels, who had been romanticized and transformed into anti-establishment heroes in the film *Scorpio Rising* by Kenneth Anger and the book *Hell's Angels* by Hunter S. Thompson, both of whom have been accused of making snuff films** for private collectors, which was also a favorite pastime of Charlie Manson, one of whose underage recruits was Didi Lansbury, who had written permission to travel with Charlie from her mother, Angela Lansbury, who starred as the control agent in *The Manchurian Candidate*, which was based on the novel of the same name by Richard Condon, who once served as a publicist for Walt Disney, who once owned the home where the Manson Family slaughtered Leno LaBianca and wife Rosemary, who was involved in the trafficking of drugs, as were many of those in this twisted saga, including Charles Manson, victims Voytek Frykowski and Abigail Folger, John Phillips and Kenneth Anger, who was a huge fan of the dark and violent imagery of the Rosicrucian-inspired, L. Frank Baum-penned *Oz* books, which inspired the band *The Magick Powerhouse of Oz*, which was led by Bobby Beausoleil, who was also at one time in the band *Love* with Arthur Lee, four of whose members later turned up dead or missing and presumed dead, as did Charlene Caffritz, Cass Elliot (who allegedly choked on a sandwich in 1974), Dennis Wilson (who allegedly drowned on December 28, 1983), and Gram Parsons, whose corpse was stolen and burned at Joshua Tree on the autumnal equinox of 1973 by his band's road manager, Phil Kaufman, who was a good friend from prison of Charlie Manson, who met (at Cass Elliot's house) and received money from victim Abigail Folger, who also funded Kenneth Anger, who at various times lived with both Jimmy Page (who purchased Crowley's home and many of his artifacts) and Keith Richards & Anita Pallenberg, whose home - in 1979 - yielded the body of a teenager who had been shot to death, as was John Lennon the next year by Mark David Chapman, who shortly before doing so met with - and offered a gift of live bullets to - Kenneth Anger, whose films were cited as a major influence by photographer Robert Mapplethorpe, who was implicated by witnesses in the Halloween 1981 execution killing of New York photographer Ronald Sisman (a close associate of Roy Radin), who was reportedly in possession of a snuff film of one of the Son of Sam murders, which were allegedly committed by David Berkowitz, who from prison accurately described the Sisman killing *before* it happened and who took the fall for the Son of Sam murders to cover up the involvement of others, including possibly Roy Radin and wealthy art dealer Andrew Crispo, who admitted being present at the site of a ritual murder

which was committed by a man named Bernard LeGeros, who was the son of a State Department official, as was Pic Dawson, who was a regular member of the entourage of Cass Elliot, as was a one-time bodyguard of publisher Larry Flynt named Bill Mentzer, who was convicted of killing Radin and who was suspected of involvement in numerous other contract murders, including some of those attributed to David Berkowitz, who was 'examined' by psychiatrist/hypnotist Daniel Schwartz, as was Mark David Chapman, who was obsessed with the film *The Wizard of Oz* and the book *The Catcher in the Rye*, which was written by reclusive author J.D. Salinger, who served in the OSS with Henry Kissinger, who was a close adviser to Gerald Ford, who once met and shook hands with Mark David Chapman, who was 'examined' by psychiatrist/hypnotist Bernard Diamond, who also 'examined' Sirhan Sirhan, who had connections to the Process Church, as did many of those ensnared in this sordid web, including Kenneth Anger, John Phillips, Roy Radin, David Berkowitz and Charlie Manson, who attended a New Year's Eve party at the home of John Phillips, who wrote the siren song of the 'Summer of Love,' bringing thousands of hippies and flower children streaming into San Francisco and into the hands of such figures as Louis "Dr. Jolly" West, Anton LaVey, Charlie Manson, Bobby Beausoleil, Timothy Leary and Kenneth Anger, who - just three days after the suspicious death of Rolling Stone Brian Jones - filmed the Hell's Angels stomping the crowd at a 1969 Stones concert in London, just five months before they did the very same thing to the crowd at Altamont, which was organized by San Francisco attorney Melvin Belli, who consulted with F. Lee Bailey whilst the latter was busily railroading Albert DeSalvo and later consulted with Richard "The Night Stalker" Ramirez, who was offered an honorary membership in the Church of Satan by Anton LaVey's daughter Zeena, who along with boyfriend Nickolas Schreck staged an event on 8-8-88 celebrating the slaughter of the victims of the Manson Family, who some researchers believe were involved in the murders attributed to the "Zodiac," who called and sent correspondence to Melvin Belli, whose clients included the widow of Hermann Goering and Jack Ruby, who assassinated Lee Harvey Oswald, the purported assassin of John Kennedy, whose brother Robert was romantically linked to Jayne Mansfield, as was Anton LaVey, who served as Roman Polanski's technical director on the 1968 film *Rosemary's Baby*, which was set in New York's Dakota Apartments, where John Lennon was gunned down by Mark David Chapman, who shared a fixation on *The Catcher in the Rye* with failed assassin John Hinckley, Jr., who stalked actress Jodie Foster, who is working on a film biography of Leni Riefenstahl, who was met by - and admired by - fellow filmmaker Kenneth Anger, who laced his film *Scorpio Rising* with Nazi imagery, including the prominent use of swastikas, not unlike the one carved into the forehead of Charlie Manson, who - at the Cielo Drive home of Polanski and Tate - had a chance meeting with Nancy Sinatra, the daughter of Frank Sinatra, who was married to actress Mia Farrow, who starred in the Polanski-directed *Rosemary's Baby*, which was produced by Robert Evans, a friend of Henry Kissinger, who was the righthand man of President Richard Nixon, whose election was ensured by the assassination of Robert Kennedy by Sirhan Sirhan, who was yet another client of Melvin Belli, as were the Hell's Angels and Nazi-collaborator Errol Flynn, who made two films with Ronald Reagan, who was an occasional visitor to the childhood home of Candace Bergen, who - as a photojournalist - chronicled the short-lived administration of Gerald Ford, who married one of his friend Harry Conover's 'Covergirls,' who later opened the Betty Ford Center, where various celebrities in and out of this web routinely check in for tune-ups.

I could probably go on, but I really have to get back to work on my screenplay. I'm thinking of trying to break into Hollywood. I have this great script about a guy who is propelled to the heights of power through a combination of fraud, arrogance, legal manipulation and public denial to lead an imperialist military power that masterfully uses propaganda to turn reality on its head.

When the man-who-would-be-king first takes office, the public views him with a

considerable amount of well-deserved skepticism. But then there is an apparent attack upon the state which is used as a pretext to rally the support of the people behind a reactionary social agenda and a war of unspecified duration with unspecified goals. Some suspect that the attack was actually an inside job, but they are ridiculed by those who scoff at the notion that their government would attack one of its own institutions.

Meanwhile, the anti-hero sells the country out to huge corporate and financial interests and institutes overt police state measures to keep the masses in line should the people ever begin to catch on that their collective reality is little more than a grand illusion. Much later, historians reluctantly admit that the purported attack was in fact a staged provocation, but by then it is too late.

I'm almost done with the final draft. I just have to decide whether to name my anti-hero Adolf or George. Then I'm going to have my people get in touch with Jerry Bruckheimer's people and close the deal.

Of course, I might have to take out some of the plot elements and replace them with gratuitous, but really cool, special effects sequences. But it will still be a great movie. Maybe even as good as the biography of the Marquis de Sade that Kenneth Anger had long planned to film, in the original castle where deSade's crimes were committed. But that's another story altogether.

* A number of journalists have written that the killing took place later in the concert. This is perhaps due, at least in part, to the deceptive way in which the film of the event, *Gimme Shelter* (arguably the most widely viewed snuff film ever created), was edited. In the film, the killing is deliberately shown out of sequence, making it appear as though it occurred at the end of the concert. It did in fact occur while the Stones played *Sympathy for the Devil*, as can be discerned from a careful viewing of the final minutes of the video version of the film. The band, fully aware of what was going on immediately in front of the stage, played on. [<back>](#)

** Thompson, whose legal representation is provided by the same politically-connected law firm that successfully shielded John and Patsy Ramsey from prosecution, has been accused by the child witnesses in the case dubbed the 'Franklin Cover-Up.' Anger was suspected by police investigators, but was shielded from prosecution by sex researcher Alfred Kinsey, a devoted follower of Aleister Crowley. Kinsey died shortly after he and Anger visited Crowley's Thelema Abbey in Sicily. [<back>](#)

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American Heroes?

David McGowan
March 4, 2002

"We never will look at police officers and rescue personnel the same way ... Such men and women help define the word 'hero' in America."

So said America's national newspaper, *USA Today*, in the aftermath of the events of September 11.

Now maybe I'm all alone here, but I'm still looking at police officers in much the same way that I was before. Which is to say that, somehow, I'm having a real hard time viewing the troops of the New York City Police Department as heroes.

This is, after all, the very same NYPD that was, prior to September 11, best known for employing anal rape with a toilet plunger as an interrogation technique, and for sending out a civilian-clad goon squad to pump nineteen rounds into a man for the crime of standing on his own front porch, preparing to enter his home.

But now, as evidenced by the fact that the convictions of three of the officers convicted of complicity in the torture of Abner Louima were just overturned by an appellate court, all such incidents are to be forgiven. And not just in New York. No, the reflected glow of the supposed heroics of New York's finest have washed away the sins of all the nation's police forces.

Take, for example, the scandal-plagued LAPD – perhaps the most openly fascistic big city police department in the country. On October 23, 2001, just six weeks after the fall of the WTC towers, the venerable *Los Angeles Times* reported, in a brief story buried in the 'B' section of the paper, that the shooting of actor Anthony Dwain Lee by officer Tarriel Hopper was "in policy" and that no disciplinary action would be taken.

For those who may have missed the story of Lee's death, he was gunned down while attending a party on Halloween night of 2000. Officer Hopper, called to the house to investigate a disturbance, illegally entered the property and spied Lee through a closed window standing in a well-lit room within the house and proceeded to, for no apparent reason and without warning, summarily execute him.

That, at any rate, is the only way that I can think of to describe what happened.

The officer claimed, rather disingenuously, that the shooting was in self-defense. Lee reportedly was in possession of a replica gun, which the officer claimed was pointed in his direction. The facts of the case though indicate that Lee was not even aware of the presence of the officer, who was standing in darkness and would not have been visible to those inside the house. There is no indication that any of the revelers were aware of Hopper's presence until bullets suddenly began blasting through the window. Lee was hit four times – in the back.

Lee's gun was a non-working replica – a part of his Halloween costume. There is nothing

to indicate that he was acting in anything approaching a threatening manner. He was in fact standing amid a crowd of fellow partiers, none of whom reported feeling that Lee was posing a threat to any of them, or to the unseen officer.

None of that though matters now. We are trying, it must be remembered, to fight a war on terrorism here. We certainly can't tie the hands of our law enforcement officers by preventing them from summarily executing the occasional domestic 'evildoer,' or from planting evidence and framing innocent 'suspects,' as the LAPD's CRASH unit was fond of doing.

All of that is also now forgiven and forgotten. Just two weeks after the *Times* reported that the killing of Lee was a "good" shooting, it reported that the city's new DA, who took office amid strident claims of being a reformer, had announced that the Rampart/CRASH probe was essentially being shut down:

"Los Angeles County prosecutors plan to close their investigation of the LAPD's Rampart scandal without bringing charges against any more officers, Dist. Atty. Steve Cooley said Wednesday. One former member of the district attorneys' Rampart investigation task force said Cooley failed to solicit or accept help from any prosecutors who were on the task force before Cooley took over."

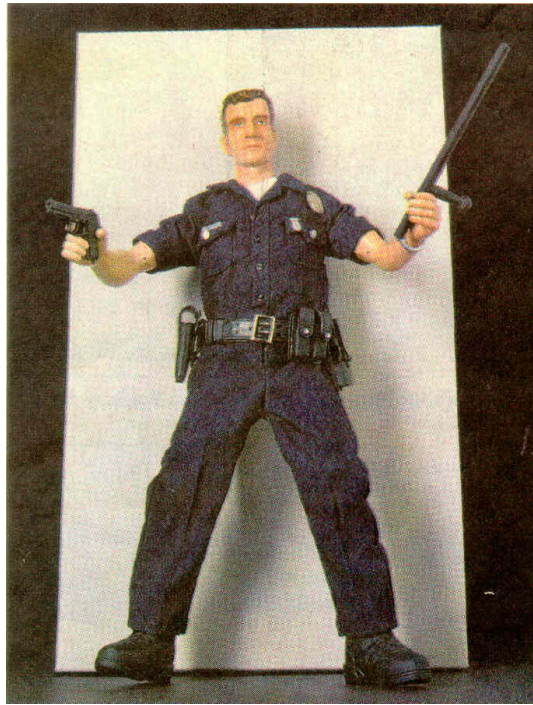
In the post 9-11 world that we are now living in, the police can do no wrong. If you are standing in your home one night, minding your own business, and bullets suddenly rip into your body from out of nowhere ... well, that's just too damn bad. Sacrifices have to be made in time of war.

If an overzealous band of jack-booted thugs decide that kicking your door down, beating the shit out of you, planting evidence and then openly perjuring themselves in court is necessary to 'keep the peace' ... well, that's also just too damn bad. Some curtailment of civil liberties is to be expected in time of war.

Exactly one month after the *Times* carried the report of the aborting of the ridiculously incomplete Rampart investigation, another story carried by the paper began: "Finally, a gift for the person who has everything: an LAPD doll."

It seems the Los Angeles Police Protective League is now marketing a 12" 'action figure,' complete with LAPD uniform, gun, baton, pepper spray, handcuffs, and - as the *Times* noted approvingly - "enough attitude to keep the peace from Rampart to West L.A."

And to think that I didn't even know that "attitude" was what was needed to "keep the peace." Kudos to the *Times* for clearing that up.



When I was a young boy, at the height of the Vietnam War, we had "G.I. Joe" to play with – the male counterpart of the ubiquitous Barbie. Little did I know that my generation was being conditioned, practically from birth, to be good little soldiers. As it turned out, of course, the war ended and our services were not needed.

Now we have a new psychological warfare device masquerading as a toy, to condition a new generation of American boys for a slightly different role: domestic law enforcement officer – though the line between domestic law enforcement and overt military operations is an increasingly fine one indeed.

The training, equipment, apparel and tactics of today's police forces are virtually indistinguishable from those employed by the military. On a regular basis, Angelenos are treated to scenes on local newscasts of small armies of LAPD officers occupying a residential neighborhood in search of a suspect. These types of arrests used to be accomplished, not too many years ago, with a handful of officers and a couple of squad cars.

But not anymore. Now what we see are scores of nameless and faceless officers, outfitted with automatic weaponry and flak jackets, ferried about in armored vehicles, and with the inevitable squadron of military-style helicopters hovering overhead. It is easy to forget that these are 'civilian' police actions we are witnessing, occurring just miles from our homes.

And now your kids can recreate these exciting scenes right there in the comfort of your home. Coming soon to join 'Officer West,' the first of the LAPD action figures to be released, will be: a K-9 officer, complete with his own dog; a motorcycle officer with, naturally, his own motorcycle; an air support officer, with his own really cool helicopter; and a SWAT team member, who will of course be outfitted in full SWAT regalia.

But my own personal favorite has to be the "riot control officer," which a league spokesman gushingly told the *Times* is "just like you saw during the [Democratic National Convention]." It sounds too good to be true, but you can now own a scale model of the very same officers who beat you senseless with batons, trampled you with horses, shot you with rubber bullets and bean bags, sprayed you with pepper spray and noxious gasses, and arrested you for exercising your alleged constitutional right to peacefully assemble to address legitimate grievances.

And you're not going to want to buy just one of these. No, you're going to want to buy a

whole bunch of them. Enough to line up along every wall of your home at least four or five deep. They'll feel much more at home that way, as that is their natural environment. They're not really designed to function well alone. They have been stripped of their ability to think independently and are only capable of a sort of mob mentality.

If, God forbid, one of your dolls should happen to die 'in the line of duty,' then you've really got a problem. In order to give them a proper send-off, you're going to have to take out a second on your house so that you can buy thousands of dolls. Then you can give the departed officer a proper funeral befitting a member of the British royal family, just like the ones we see on TV.

And why, you may ask, are our law enforcement personnel deserving of such a pompous display? Is it because the job they perform is of so much more value to society than are the jobs performed by the rest of us? I hardly think so. Educators perform a far more valuable service than do the police, and yet I can't recall ever seeing a teacher laid to rest in a ceremony rivaling the inauguration of a president.

Is it then because the police perform a job so dangerous - laying their lives on the line daily to protect the rest of us - that they are deserving of special consideration? Not really. There are any number of occupations that are far more dangerous than that performed by the police. Crab fishing in the Bering Straights is said to be the most dangerous job in the world, and yet the rather routine deaths of these brave souls are mourned by almost no one.

The case could be made that dissident writers perform a more dangerous task than do our domestic police. Just ask the surviving family and friends of such scribes as the 'suicided' Danny Casolaro and James Hatfield.

You may remember Hatfield as the author of the book *Fortunate Son*, released by St. Martin's Press as the 2000 presidential election campaign was taking shape and then quickly pulled from shelves and mulched under pressure from the Bush family. Hatfield turned up dead in a hotel room just weeks before September 11. His last published piece was a story in the *Online Journal* entitled "Why Would Osama bin Laden Want to Kill Dubya, His Former Business Partner?"

Or ask the survivors of 'former' Naval Intelligence asset William Milton Cooper, the iconoclastic author of the overrated conspiracy tome *Behold a Pale Horse*. Cooper was gunned down by local Sheriff's deputies (possibly at the instigation of federal authorities, according to some accounts) not long after he began devoting his radio broadcasts to promoting the idea that the September 11 attacks were an inside job.

Neither of these men, or the legions of others who came before them, were paid their final respects in ceremonies befitting the coronation of a king.

Why then this hero-worship of our nation's law enforcement personnel? Why this adulation of men who are frequently little more than criminals themselves – men who differ from those they arrest only by the fact that they are protected from the consequences of their actions by virtue of the uniforms that they wear?

This hero-worship has escalated considerably since September 11. It is instructive then to look back upon the events of that fateful day to see exactly what it was that the police did to earn their enhanced status as American heroes. Towards that end, it is always interesting, when trying to make sense of any big media story, to look back upon some of the initial press reports to emerge, before the all-consuming official spin sets in.

The UK's *The Guardian*, one of the world's most respected English language newspapers, ran a lengthy report from ground zero by a trio of its reporters the day after the alleged 'terrorist' attacks. Here is how they described situation on the ground just after the first tower collapsed – well over an hour after the ordeal had begun:

"First a stampede; flying glass cutting into flesh and ripping the clothes of those who fled - and no sign whatsoever of the authorities, only a police officer running about like a headless chicken (in the wrong direction) shouting: 'Get outta here!'" Later in the report it was added

that: "The full rescue operation was slow to arrive."

Still further along in the report, we find a representative of the NYPD treating the traumatized victims of the tower collapses exactly as a cynic might expect them to: "Even the smallest unrelated incident created conflict. A man who left his briefcase in the street was accosted by a cop. 'What you doing? Hey, just keep walking.'"

Such actions, apparently, are the makings of great American heroes.

A number of other interesting details emerged in the report from *The Guardian* – details that to this day have not been addressed by the media, including the so-called alternative/progressive media. These details beg rather obvious questions that have gone completely unasked by our gloriously 'free' American press.

For instance, there is the rather interesting fact that: "People were trying desperately to get through on cell phones that were no longer functioning." Very few accounts of the events of that day have noted that cell phones throughout the affected area suddenly stopped working. Why would this be so? Why should a building fire and collapse cause widespread cell phone failure?

Another interesting tidbit of information to emerge from *The Guardian* was that: "At a junction where the traffic lights had stuck on red a man in a flak jacket and combat trousers took it upon himself to direct the sparse traffic." Who was this rather curiously attired man and what was he doing at ground zero?

And consider this rather curious factoid: "One stockbroker, Alan Redmond, said he had arrived for work at the Nasdaq exchange to be told that there was a delay in opening, and to wait." Why was there a delay in opening the Nasdaq that morning, and how many prominent lives were spared due to this 'delay'?

Lastly, consider that "a 47-storey building which was part of the trade centre complex also collapsed, brought down by flying debris and fire." How is it possible that a third high-rise, and one which was not struck by a plane and doused with jet fuel, collapsed in identical fashion to the two towers? If it was due to a weakening of the structure caused by falling debris, then how is it that a building which lay between the twin towers and the third fallen structure remains standing?

These, alas, are but a few of the nagging questions that remain unasked, and certainly unanswered, in the months since "everything changed." Sadly, one thing that definitely hasn't changed is the unfathomable cravenness of the U.S. media.

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America Through The Looking Glass

by David McGowan

April 8, 2002

In the immortal words of Lewis Carroll, things are getting curiouser and curiouser. If there has ever been a more bizarre presidential team in place at the White House at any other time in U.S. history, it doesn't immediately come to mind.

Consider, if you will, that we have a vice-president (and I use that term rather loosely) who has all but disappeared from public view without any kind of credible explanation having been given to the American people. It appeared at first as though Cheney's vanishing act was a temporary and cynical ploy that would allow George the Younger to appear as though he were actually running the show.

But six months have now passed and Dick has only been whipped out for a few passing photo-ops (and to do some arm-twisting in the Middle-East). Never before, even during times of World or Civil War, has such secrecy and security ever been deemed necessary. What possible explanation can there be for this? What credible threats is the vice-president facing?

The only possible danger that Cheney could find himself in would be facing impeachment proceedings for, among other things, his involvement in the Enron scandal and his questionable dealings with Iraq. [\(1\)](#) But that of course could only happen if we had a Congress that wasn't as fully corrupt as the White House team that they are supposed to provide checks and balances on.

Consider also that we have a president (and I use that term even more loosely) who is so intellectually challenged that before even losing the election he had already issued enough verbal gaffes to fill a book or two. He seemingly cannot open his mouth to utter an unscripted response without lapsing into almost complete incoherence, as though he received his English instruction via home-schooling by his dad.

On top of that, he has appeared in public no fewer than three times now with

noticeably large bruises/contusions on his face. First there was the enormous bandage he sported in the dark days of the 'hanging chads.' Then there were the obvious contusions late in the year that would have gone without mention were it not for a reporter's question; only then did the White House hurriedly issue a claim that Bush had had lesions removed from his face.

And then we were treated to the sublimely comical story that our fearless leader lost consciousness while snacking on a pretzel and fell face-first into a coffee table (I could make a cheap joke here about the 'leader of the free world' being unable to watch TV and chew pretzels at the same time, but will refrain from doing so). And we were told that this is actually a very common occurrence.

Say what? In what parallel universe is this a common occurrence? What exactly is going on behind closed doors on Pennsylvania Avenue?

Is Poppy Bush trying to slap some sense into his brain-addled youngster? Is George hitting the bottle a little too hard ... just before hitting the floor? Is Stepford-wife Laura a closet dominatrix who sometimes gets a little carried away ("Goddamnit, Laura! How many times do I have to tell you? ... stay away from the face!")? Something is obviously not quite right here.

The media though doesn't seem to find anything unusual about the George and Dick Show. Nary a question has been raised about what exactly Cheney is doing in his 'secure' location. Bush's incoherent mumblings, brain-deadening jingoism, and stunning lack of knowledge about any issue of any significance are somehow presented as though the man has magically assumed presidential stature unequalled in U.S. history.

What the hell is going on here?

For the most part, just business-as-usual as the media performs its time-honored role of covering-up for the inadequacies and crimes of our 'elected' leaders. Yet it has become bizarrely surreal as the press struggles mightily to continue performing that function even while faced with an administration both arrogant and criminal almost beyond human comprehension.

How are we to digest the events of the last year? -- the wholesale theft of a presidential election, the massive give-aways to the largest and most corrupt corporations in the country, the largely unexplained and completely uninvestigated September 11 attacks, the declaration of open-ended war on much of the world, the rapidly escalating attacks on civil liberties and privacy rights

Millions are surely struggling to make sense of their world as the full extent of the

corruption of the American political, economic and legal systems is increasingly laid bare. Denial is a fierce weapon, but it does have its limits -- even when aided and abetted by a 'mental health' community that hands out MK-ULTRA-derived anti-anxiety and anti-depressant drugs like Halloween candy.

How are we to make sense of a vast sea of media outlets all shouting the same lies and all failing to ask the most obvious of questions? How are we to account for an allegedly thriving 'alternative' press that takes at face value the official version of the events of September 11 -- pretending not to notice the gaping holes in the story? And how are we to make sense of the fact that the leading voices of the supposed 'left' have questioned the events of 9-11 only in terms of so-called 'blowback,' carefully avoiding questioning the underlying assumption that "Osama did it?"

And how long can we cling to the futile hope that the Democratic Party is somehow going to ride to the rescue and get us out of this mess? The party whose two standard-bearers, "Animatronic Al" Gore and Joe "Jews for Fascism" Lieberman, have openly cheered the 'War on Terrorism,' all but demanded its expansion into Iraq, endorsed the preposterous notion of an 'Axis of Evil,' and given favorable reviews to America's new nuclear 'Posture'? The party whose congressional members, in both houses, have embraced nearly every reactionary appointment by the Bush regime, signed on to every openly fascist 'security' measure that has come their way, given a huge thumbs-up to virtually unlimited military spending, and failed completely to voice even the tiniest protest over the flagrant theft of the election or to launch any sort of an investigation into the events of September 11?

And those are just a few of the Democratic Party's recent sins. Of course, our learned opinion-shapers insist that the Democrats' hands are tied -- hampered by the massive public support behind the Bush agenda. Opinion polls, brought to you by the very same media to whom lying is an art form, keep insisting that to be the case. And I have a couple of towers in New York that I can let you have for a real good price

The truth is that the Democratic Party, quite frankly, offers no resistance to the Bush juggernaut because they differ from their Republican counterparts only in that they give slightly more lip-service to social issues. And that, of course, is only posturing for public consumption.

Changing the party in charge of the White House and/or Congress isn't going to significantly alter the agenda. Everyone of any importance in Washington is on-board the war train for the long haul. And the notion that the war is being prolonged just to gain a Republican advantage in the 2002 and 2004 elections, propagated by many a pseudo-dissident journalist, is pure fantasy.

As has been made quite clear by a steady stream of official statements, this is a 'war' without end -- a war with the goal of wiping out any and all pockets of resistance throughout the world, including here on the home front, to the corporate and military elite's vision of a system of global fascism, and with the parallel goal of identifying false enemies to keep the American people too frightened, disoriented and disjointed to fight back against the encroaching police state. Doesn't anybody read Orwell anymore?

But I know how comforting it is to believe in the American ship of state. To believe in the two-party system. To believe in the Democratic Party as the party of the people. To believe that things will be OK again just as soon as the next election rolls around and we can get 'our' party back in charge. To believe that our obviously free press isn't really lying to us. To believe that 'this too shall pass,' and that we'll be back to 'normal' soon.

It wasn't that long ago that I was a believer.

But that was before I joined the ranks of those who inhabit a strange, hallucinatory world that is roughly akin to waking up every morning finding yourself trapped in a cheesy sci-fi film. Clicking on the TV, you find that the same lies that you just heard the day before are still spewing out. Turning the channel, you discover that everyone is telling the same lies, in the same way, using the same catch-phrases as though if everyone repeats them they somehow acquire some kind of inherent meaning.

No matter how many times you change the channel, all you hear is "war on terrorism ... axis of evil ... rule of law ... evil-doers ... weapons of mass destruction ... enduring freedom ... 9-11 ... 9-11 ... 9-11 ..."

You briefly ponder whether you might be a victim of some kind of practical joke -- an unwitting participant in some kind of new 'reality show.' But then you find that everyone else seems to believe the lies, or at least they pretend to. Could they all be in on the joke? And if this isn't a joke, then how come you seem to be the only one who can see so clearly that the emperor has no clothes?

You hear on the news that the key witness in the biggest financial scandal in the nation's history has been found shot to death in his car not long before he is to begin delivering his testimony. "Holy shit!" you say, "they're killing off witnesses in broad daylight." But no, the somber newscasters all intone, it was an unfortunate suicide.

"Ha!" you say, "nobody's going to believe that one. The shit is really going to fly now." You remember back to when Vince Foster supposedly committed suicide,

and how the 'liberal' media had a field day with the story. "Payback's a bitch," you say to yourself. "The Dumbocrats are going to get some mileage out of this one."

But nobody says a word. No one on Capitol Hill, no one in the press corps. You mention to some co-workers that the suicide story sounds a little suspect, and they look at you as though you are wearing an "I Love Osama" button on your lapel as they robotically ask you if you've been to see *Black Hawk Down* yet. Realizing that you've blown your cover, you start nervously watching out of the corner of your eye for the goon squad to arrive and send you happily on your way to Guantánamo.

The Enron scandal, you quickly realize, is not going to be seriously investigated -- just as the coup-like nature of the election wasn't investigated, and just as the 'terrorist' attacks on Washington and New York aren't being investigated, and just like the anthrax attacks, so obviously timed to ratchet up the level of fear and outrage among the American people, aren't being investigated.

You absent-mindedly take note of the 'terrorist alert' warning color for the day as you ponder when this extended acid trip began and if and when it is going to end. What will it take to wake the American people up to the fact that there is something seriously wrong with this picture?

The mounting of a coup d'état in that diseased appendage known as Florida didn't do it. (2) Nor did the Supreme Court arrogantly ruling that the American people have no right to have their votes counted in a presidential election. (3) Nor the revelation that the Bush regime -- itself a shamelessly illegal, unconstitutionally-assembled government -- has established an even more illegal, secret and unaccountable 'shadow' government. And neither did the fact that military tribunals have been proscribed that have the authority to hand down anonymous death sentences based on secret evidence presented by government-appointed lawyers.

The indefinite detention of 'suspects,' held without charges in undisclosed locations and largely deprived of legal counsel, didn't do it. Nor the open talk of torturing these same 'suspects.' Nor the open admissions of an emerging surveillance infrastructure that goes far beyond anything Orwell ever envisioned. Nor even the deliberate leaking of the country's sociopathic 'Nuclear Posture Review.' And, as we have seen repeatedly in the past, mercilessly bombing yet another civilian population in yet another oil-driven military venture certainly didn't do it.

Is the control too complete -- control not just of information, but of *thought*? Are we so blinded by propaganda, and so desperately clinging to the basic human desire to view ourselves as the good guys, that we are fundamentally incapable of taking an objective look at the world we live in? Can the government get away with

literally any lie, no matter how brazen? Is there no hope?

Or is the script of this particular Roger Corman flick somewhat different than what it appears to be?

What if you're not the only sane person left in a world gone mad? What if there are millions of others out there, all harboring serious doubts about the increasingly unpalatable servings of 'news' we are being dished-up? And what if the number of such individuals is growing every day?

What if the constant touting of Bush's alleged popularity is all part of a well-orchestrated psy-war campaign aimed at stifling dissent by intimidating doubters in the crowd into keeping their opinions to themselves, lest they be viewed as clinically insane for failing to interpret reality in the same way that everyone else purportedly does?

A campaign designed to make you feel, in other words, precisely as you now do: alone, isolated, frustrated, powerless, frightened and confused. A part of that campaign seems to involve, amazingly enough, efforts to taunt you -- to rub in your face your utter powerlessness -- by dropping tantalizing hints along the way, as though you are being dared to do something about it.

Wasn't it, after all, France's *Le Figaro* that dropped that little bombshell about bin Laden meeting a CIA operative in a Dubai hospital room shortly before September 11? And isn't *Le Figaro* owned by the Carlyle Group, whose investors and principals include the Bushes, the bin Ladens, and various ranking members of the national security infrastructure?

And wasn't it that mouthpiece of the far-right, the *Wall Street Journal*, that dropped the story about the stock market manipulations that occurred in the days immediately preceding the September 11 attacks?

And wasn't it a vice-president of the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, itself a fully-integrated part of the military/intelligence complex, who initially identified the collapse of the World Trade Center towers as controlled implosions?

And wasn't it James Bamford (a man with uncomfortably close connections to numerous NSA operatives), working with Doubleday (a publisher not known for bringing the work of dissident authors to light), whose book -- released just five months before 9-11 -- revealed the details of 'Operation Northwoods' -- a purported anti-Cuban operation involving a staged provocation with marked similarities to the events of September 11?

And what of the obviously deliberate, and curiously well-publicized, leaks of the so-called Nuclear Posture Review, of the existence of Dick's 'shadow' government, and of the proposed Ministry of Propaganda? [*](#) Why leave all these crumbs scattered along the evidence trail?

It's a little something the spooks like to call 'Mind War' -- more commonly known on the streets as 'fucking with your head.' They *want* you to feel as though you are stuck in the *Twilight Zone*. I believe Mr. Orwell referred to it as a state of "controlled insanity."

But even with the endless blizzard of propaganda -- coming straight at you from all directions, including from virtually every avenue of the media, 'news' and 'entertainment' alike -- there are clear indications emerging that there is considerably more dissent out there, considerably more questions being raised, than we are being led to believe.

As just one indication, several commentators have noted that Michael Moore's new book, *Stupid White Men*, is selling like hotcakes, despite the fact that conventional wisdom holds that there is currently no market for what is reportedly a fairly harsh assessment of America under a Bush.

Perhaps a more significant measure of the level of discontent and frustration among the American people was reflected in the shockingly low turnout for the recent California gubernatorial primary. As the *Los Angeles Times* reported:

"After the terrorists struck and the buildings fell, Americans united in a surge of patriotism not seen in a generation. On Tuesday in California, citizens were asked to join in what may be the most patriotic ritual of all, the celebration of democracy known as voting. Two out of three registered voters were no-shows." [\(4\)](#)

The article also noted that many eligible voters didn't even bother to register. The net result was that nearly *four out of five* eligible California voters opted not to cast a vote in the March primary. The *Times* further noted that the California election was a continuation of a post-September 11 trend:

"In Washington, for instance, turnout for the November general election -- which featured two ballot initiatives on taxes -- was 13 percentage points below the 1999 figure. Virginia and New Jersey elected governors in November, and turnout was down about 3% and 7%, respectively, from the previous governor's races in 1997.

"In Georgia, meanwhile, a special election to fill a state Senate seat was decided by just 3% of the electorate: 'It's always low in specials, but we usually get 15%,'

lamented Georgia's director of elections, Linda Beazley. 'This is dismal. What's wrong with our voters?'" (4)

A concerted effort is made by the *Times* reporter to offer up any number of excuses for the dismal voter turnout. But three words in the article, uttered by a small-business owner in Fresno, pretty much said it all: "Politics are crooked." Or, to elaborate just a bit -- a large majority of citizens recognize that voting -- when presented with hand-picked, interchangeable candidates -- is not a true exercise of democracy, but rather an exercise in futility.

Perhaps one of the clearest indications that large sectors of the American electorate aren't buying the mainstream-media line is the fact that the decades-long effort to discredit and marginalize those dissidents derisively referred to as 'conspiracy theorists' has been stepped-up dramatically in recent months, by both the corporate media and the self-proclaimed 'alternative' press.

Prominent among those heaping derision on 'conspiracy theories' is *The Nation's* David Corn. Among other inanities, a piece penned by Corn makes the rather remarkable claim that: "Simply put, the spies and special agents are not good enough, evil enough, or gutsy enough to mount this operation ... Such an operation -- to execute the simultaneous destruction of the two towers, a piece of the Pentagon, and four airplanes and make it appear as if it all was done by another party -- is far beyond the skill level of U.S. intelligence." [\(5\)](#)

No ... an operation of that sort would clearly require a loosely-organized band of poorly-equipped cave-dwellers.

There's no way that the largest and most well-funded intelligence network the world has ever seen could pull off something like that. They may be capable of rigging foreign elections, routinely plotting and carrying out assassinations and coups, and 'destabilizing' the economies and political structures of various hapless nations, but it clearly strains credulity to posit that they could hijack a few planes.

They may have an enormous, secret and unaccountable budget, 'front' companies and organizations set up in every corner of the globe, and prominent mouthpieces installed throughout academia, the media, the legal community, the mental health community, the entertainment community, the medical community, and pretty much every other community that is in a position to influence public opinion; and they may control proxy armies and fascist (though certainly not 'terrorist') cells around the world, and they may have their very own private air force, but certainly no one would ever seriously suggest that such a vast intelligence network could pull off something of the magnitude of what the world saw on September 11.

As yet another reason why alternative explanations of 9-11 are, in Corn's words, "absurd," "tripe," and "crap," he makes the bold claim that: "in the spy-world some things [are] beyond the pale." One of those things, insists Corn, is "kill[ing] an American citizen." (5) That would certainly take the wind out of the sails of many a 'conspiracy theory' -- if it weren't a statement totally unsupported by the historical record.

Corn has already been challenged in print by such writers as Stephen Gowans, Alex Constantine, and Michael Ruppert, who is identified in the Corn article as one of those who are promoting conspiracy theories "too silly to address." Corn has also, apparently, been challenged by many of his readers. In an *L.A. Times* opinion piece, he complains of the response to his missive: "I was besieged by people accusing me of being a CIA disinformation agent." (6) [Imagine that.](#)

Corn ends his diatribe on an interesting note: "Perhaps there's a Pentagon or CIA office that churns out this material. It's mission: distract people from the real wrongdoing." (5) There is little doubt that at least some of the conspiracy theories seeking to explain the events of September 11 have been put out as deliberate disinformation to muddy the waters. But when it comes to distracting people from the "real wrongdoing," few allegedly progressive publications do as good a job at that as does the one that Corn is associated with.

The *L.A. Times* piece, written by Gale Holland a few weeks after the Corn article was posted, is a particularly offensive attack on 'conspiracy theorists.' The article, entitled "Have You Heard About Osama's Cheez-It Stash?," is illustrated with oversized, side-by-side photos of Osama bin Laden and, naturally enough, Elvis Presley. The obvious and rather heavy-handed intent is to equate alternative explanations for the September 11 attacks with Elvis sightings.

Apparently the newspaper didn't have any stock photos of any 'alien grays' to accompany the article.

Holland refers dismissively to what he calls a "conspiracy lobby, a tiny but persistent subgroup spawned by the John F. Kennedy assassination" that is obsessed with "shadowy government agencies with Maxwell Smartish-sounding acronyms." (6)

As for how this "persistent subgroup" views September 11, Holland writes that: "In the misty climes where the far left meets the far right, conspiracy theories have begun to dominate the 9/11 rumor mill. The basic premise is that President Bush/ the CIA/ Big Oil either planned the attacks or let them happen to secure a U.S. oil pipeline/ take over the Middle East/ launch a one-world government." (6)

Well ... let's see now. Is it 'conspiracy theorizing' to posit that Bush, the CIA and "Big Oil" would work together towards a common cause? Is there any political family in the country with closer and more extensive ties to both the CIA and the oil industry than the Bush family? Isn't it only stating the obvious to note that this triumvirate shares common interests and goals -- goals that were in fact advanced as a result of the 'terrorist' attacks?

As for the pipeline, it is a well-documented fact that the U.S. has long harbored plans to build both oil and natural gas pipelines through the nation of Afghanistan. (7) It is also an established fact that the oil companies have long coveted having a 'stable regime' (which is to say, a regime under the direct control of the U.S.) in place before committing to constructing those pipelines. (7) And it has already been reported that those pipeline plans, which have languished in recent years, have now been put on the fast track. (8)

As for the Middle East, it certainly appears as though there is a major effort underway to destabilize the entire region -- currently being spearheaded by the U.S.-armed proxy known as Israel, but likely soon to be coupled with a U.S. invasion of Iraq, accompanied by general mayhem in the area. It should also be noted that oil-rich Central Asia is quite obviously slated to be brought under the control of the U.S. as well, with troop deployments and the building of military bases in the region accelerating rapidly. (9)

And as for the notion of a one-world government, what exactly does Holland think is the goal of all those "Maxwell Smartish-sounding acronyms" -- the IMF, the WTO, the CFR, the TLC -- if not to turn the planet into one global marketplace governed only by corporate spreadsheets -- a global marketplace that can be exploited and pillaged to consolidate all of the world's wealth into the hands of the few?

Even while dismissing 'conspiracy theories,' Holland obliquely acknowledges the implausibility of the official 9-11 story: "Faced with the inexplicable, we seem to take comfort in irrational pseudo-explanations." (6) Or perhaps, when faced with the irrational pseudo-explanations offered by the state, we take comfort in searching for a more rational, logical explanation. Or, as Gowans has written for *Swans*: "Where the official conspiracy theory is so bad, other conspiracy theories rush in to fill the void." (10)

Also jumping into the conspiracy-bashing fray, the very same week that the *L.A. Times* opinion piece was published, was the allegedly progressive *L.A. Weekly*. A report by Ella Taylor purported to shed light on the KPFK controversy -- by declaring the "jewel in [the station's] crown" (11) to be Marc Cooper, the 'left's' leading cheerleader for the 'War on Terror' and an unapologetic supporter of the

Warren Report.

Throughout the article, Taylor refers to anyone whose politics fall to the left of hers -- which is to say, anyone who is even vaguely progressive -- as "hard-line Marxists," the "Marxist left," the "far left" which spouts "vulgar Marxist doctrine," and finally as the "loony left." Exemplifying the "far left," according to Taylor, is "Amy Goodman's popular *Democracy Now*" -- easily the most honest offering the station serves up.

Singled out for derision in Taylor's tirade, as he was by both Corn and Holland, is Michael Ruppert, a former LAPD investigator who runs the *From the Wilderness* website (www.copvicia.com) and newsletter. In the *Weekly* piece, he is described as a "defrocked cop" and a "nutball conspiracy theorist." That title is bestowed upon him for the sin of having compiled a timeline of occurrences in the months leading up to September 11, drawn from respectable media sources, that all raise serious questions about the official version of events.

As for Taylor's hero -- Marc Cooper, one of Corn's fellow scribes at *The Nation* -- she notes that he "has received hundreds of e-mails insinuating that he survived the coup in Chile because he's a CIA agent who plotted the murder of his boss, Salvador Allende." (11) Imagine that.

The conspiracy debunkers are striking on other fronts as well. A website billing itself as the *Urban Legends Reference Pages* (www.snopes2.com) has skyrocketed in popularity in the post-9-11 world, largely due to numerous citations in the print and broadcast media (Holland's *L.A. Times* piece references the site twice). Along with purportedly debunking so-called 'urban legends,' the site has focused its attention of late on various September 11 'conspiracy theories.'

On television, cable's TNN premiered its new *Conspiracy Zone* in January 2002. The primary purpose of the show appears to be to make 'conspiracy theorists' the butt of jokes by the show's marginally talented host, Kevin Nealon, and by the show's almost entirely untalented celebrity guests, such as Gabe "Welcome Back, Kotter" Kaplan and Adam "The Man Show" Carrola.

The most recent airing of the show, on March 31, 2002, featured an appearance by, of all people, Mike Ruppert -- to discuss the 1968 assassination of Robert Kennedy. Every effort was made to discredit the facts brought to the table by Ruppert (who came very well prepared), but the ringer brought in for the job, Ann Coulter, was clearly outclassed and reduced to repeatedly making the asinine assertion that "million-to-one coincidences" actually occur millions of times every day, and so we should expect to find numerous oddities and discrepancies littered throughout the RFK evidence.

Coulter is, by the way, the very same reprehensible individual who recently wrote in the *National Review* that America's response to the perpetrators of September 11 should be to "invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity." More recently, princess Ann has been quoted as saying: "In contemplating college liberals, you really regret, once again, that John Walker is not getting the death penalty. We need to execute people like John Walker in order to physically intimidate liberals by making them realize that they could be killed, too. Otherwise they will turn out into outright traitors." [\(12\)](#) Talk about your "nutballs" ...

The question that needs to be raised here is: why is all this energy being expended to discredit 'conspiracy theorists'? If we're just talking here about a few "nutballs" preaching to a "tiny subgroup," then why all the fuss? What possible threat to the purportedly rock-solid American system could such a marginalized group pose?

As anyone who has ever published material in this country that falls outside of the boundaries of acceptable dissent can tell you, the first response of the power structure is not to attack the messenger -- it is to *ignore* the messenger. If the publication receives no mention by the media, if it garners no reviews and -- as is virtually always the case -- the publisher lacks the resources and/or the opportunities to market the work, then for all intents and purposes the published material does not exist.

It is only if and when the information manages to find an audience despite the obstacles erected, *despite* being ignored in the hopes that it would just go away, that the second line of defense kicks in: destroy, by any means necessary, the credibility of the source.

We can only conclude from this then that 'conspiracy theories' are beginning to reach a much wider, and much more receptive, audience than the boys in Washington are comfortable with. And that which can't be ignored must be destroyed. Coupled with the depressed voter turnouts and the apparent hunger by the American people for books critical of the current agenda, it begins to look as though there may be a considerable amount of dissent bubbling just beneath America's tranquil surface.

That simmering anger and frustration can be gauged in another way as well -- by perusing the e-mails that are pouring in to websites that offer alternative 9-11 scenarios. The confusion, anger and fear is palpable in such mailings. They frequently begin something like this: "I have never considered myself to be a conspiracy theorist, but"

The desperation evident in such mailings is striking, as respondents struggle mightily to find answers to questions they never thought they would be asking. One such letter, drawn from my own mailbag, captures quite eloquently the spirit of such letter writers. It is reproduced here just as it was received:

"I am 52 years old, an Episcopal nun (formerly a professional musician and, before quitting my day job, a math teacher) and the executive director of a small non-profit organization -- an interfaith meditation center. I'm a pretty mainstream sort of person -- liberal on most issues and conservative on a few. I'm moderately well educated (master's degree), reasonably well read, and considerably well traveled -- having studied some in England and worked for years in both Ireland and South Africa as well as various parts of the United States. Until quite recently I considered 'conspiracy theorists' to be, at best, pathetically misguided and, more likely, suffering from paranoid delusions. I don't know what was the wake up call for me after September 11. Maybe it was Dan Rather prostituting himself on the Dave Letterman show. Maybe it was Time Magazine's photograph of Osama Bin Laden in evil red. Maybe it was watching unprecedented war powers handed to the executive branch with only one congressperson daring to utter a lone plea for moderation that hardly qualifies as dissent. Maybe it was that implosion of the towers that looked suspect from the get-go. I'm the only person I know who has actually read huge chunks of that so-called 'Patriot's Act' and it makes my blood run cold. I knew then that I was watching a coup inexorably unfold and I'm sick at heart.

"I've only talked about any of this with one trusted colleague who warned me that I was starting to sound like those crackpots who think the moon landings were faked. I don't dare tell him that I'm actually having my serious doubts about that too. (Why haven't we gone back in 30 years? Why has no other nation duplicated the feat?)

"I'm wondering if I'm losing it or finally seeing clearly. The magnitude of it all is devastating. The 'cognitive dissonance' is horribly painful. I understand why people turn off their faculties for critical thought and inquiry; they want to be able to sleep in their beds in reasonable peace.

"What do you propose that ordinary people like me actually do? I currently live in a very conservative part of the country where the flag-waving jingoism is nauseating."

E-mails such as this pile up in my in-box day after day, week after week -- awaiting answers that are difficult to come by. What, indeed, can ordinary people do to reverse the course we are on? How are we to begin to fight back against a system that few seem to even recognize as an enemy of the people?

The best advice that I can offer at this time to all those who currently inhabit *The Twilight Zone* is to let your voices be heard. Stop biting your tongues and begging off from engaging in political debates. You just may find that there are other non-believers around you who are just waiting for someone else to break the ice.

As much as appearances may suggest otherwise, you are not alone. There are many other non-believers out there, but they too are intimidated into silence. You will only find them if you have the courage to speak up -- if you refuse to be cowed by the propaganda war. Only then can grass-roots organizing begin to take shape.

Alone, you are powerless. But you don't have to be alone.

Gale Holland concluded his *L.A. Times* opinion piece with the following words: "Getting at the truth is tough, accepting it can be harder still. Paranoia is a lot easier." (6) Getting at the truth is indeed tough. And accepting it may be one of the hardest things that you ever do. But it is not paranoia that is easier; it is complacent acceptance of the inexplicable.

The unfortunate reality though is that there isn't time for complacent acceptance. We don't have the luxury of taking the easy route. And maybe, just maybe, there are enough quiet dissenters out there to make a difference. And maybe, just maybe, our fearless leaders have overstepped this time -- overestimated the level of lies and corruption that they can get away with.

Those are, alas, very big 'maybes.' But now is certainly not the time to throw in the towel by standing mute. The stakes are far too high. Our children and grandchildren have to grow up in this world that is being created for them. They deserve far better. For their sake, it is time for all the non-believers to stand up and be counted. And to refuse to sit back down until our voices are heard. The clock is ticking

* All of these leaks were, notably, disinformational. The premise of the Nuclear Posture Review, for instance, was that America's eagerness to unleash nuclear weapons came about in response to the September 11 attacks. Earlier documents reveal, however, that the United States has been itching to cross the nuclear threshold since long before last September. The reports of the establishment of a 'shadow' government implied that America hasn't long been run from behind the curtain. And the uproar over the proposed establishment of a disinformation ministry served to cloak the fact that the overwhelming majority of the news we already get is government approved disinformation/propaganda. ([back](#))

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David McGowan is a photographer, a contractor, a political essayist and a writer

who lives in Southern California. He is the author of "Derailing Democracy: The America the Media Don't Want You to See" (March 2000, Common Courage Press, ISBN: 1567511856) and "Understanding the F-Word: American Fascism and the Politics of Illusion" (Writers Club Press, 2001) which was [recently reviewed](#) by Steve Gowans on *Swans*. McGowan maintains his own Web site, the [Centre for an Informed America](#). This is McGowan's first contribution to *Swans*.

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## *Lee Harvey Oswald Goes to Nanterre*

*David McGowan*  
*April 18, 2002*

"These days, France is a tough place to be a cop." (1)

So said the *Los Angeles Times* on March 22, 2002. The timing of this report was rather curious, to say the least, though that fact wouldn't become apparent until a few days later – when a man named Richard Durn paid a visit to the city council chambers of Nanterre, France.

The *Times* article was intended to be an exposé on the rampant levels of lawlessness and lack of respect for law enforcement that are allegedly sweeping the nation of France, leading to what reporter Sebastian Rotella called "a time of discontent for French police. Crime was up 7.6% in 2001, continuing a trend marked by what police union officials say was a fourfold increase in physical and verbal assaults on officers in the last five years. Last year, more than 600 officers were attacked while on duty." (2)

The blame for this state of affairs was laid, naturally enough, squarely on the shoulders of the politicians of various left-wing persuasions who populate the French political structure. Where else to place the blame but on those criminal-coddling politicians who - according to the *Times* - "seem out of touch with the street"? (3)

Fueling this crime wave, alluded the newspaper, is a law enforcement reform measure passed last year aimed at guaranteeing suspects "immediate access to a lawyer and other Miranda-type safeguards," to combat what the *Times* described as "an inquisitorial justice culture that had created one of Europe's largest populations of suspects jailed while awaiting trial or indictment." (4)

The reform measure actually went beyond the safeguards established here in the U.S. by the Miranda decision (which is currently slated for review by the same people who appointed the president). It includes, for example, provisions for webcams to be used to monitor the interrogation of juveniles, and for medical doctors to be brought in to determine if a suspect has been physically abused while in custody.

This purportedly 'soft-on-crime' reform measure, the *Times* would have us believe, has led to an unprecedented level of brazenness among France's 'criminal element.'

The "most outrageous case" cited as an example by the *Times* "was the ambush slaying in October of two officers responding to a home invasion. Suspect Jean-Claude Bonnal, an ex-convict accused of killing four civilians two weeks earlier in a holdup, had been released on bail the previous December--even though he was awaiting trial for a department store robbery that left nine wounded." (5)

Bonnal was free to roam the streets, implied the *Times*, because of the restrictions placed on law enforcement by the legal reforms. A cynic might ponder whether he wasn't

deliberately unleashed upon society in order to teach the people a lesson about the consequences of 'coddling' criminals. In any event, the double slaying of the officers brought to eight the number of law enforcement personnel killed last year in France.

It also proved to be the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back: "Resentment in the ranks boiled over in November. National police officers held demonstrations across the country. Then came the turn of the gendarmerie, the force that patrols the rural areas." (6) The demonstrations were said to be spawned by spiraling crime rates, police resentment of the law enforcement reform measure, and the political establishment's alleged lack of support for the law enforcement community.

What the police demonstrations appear to actually have been though is an integral part of a campaign in which fear of supposedly rampant criminality is being manufactured and manipulated to push a law-and-order agenda that is clearly intended to push the French electorate in the direction of the most right-wing elements of the French political structure – precisely mirroring, in every detail, the psychological warfare campaign that has been waged here in the States for the last several decades.

Crime in France has, no doubt, been on the rise in recent years. *The Guardian* has reported that: "France's crime rate surged by a record 8% last year, exceeding 4m offences for the first time in the country's history. Violent crimes, particularly armed robberies, increased by 9.8%, while the number of rapes rose by 13.2% and there was a sharp rise in offences carried out by under-13s." (7)

The *Independent*, however, offered a different take on France's recent rise in criminality: "Never mind the statistics, which show that the French murder rate has been falling steadily (as has the American murder rate) ... Never mind the fact that, despite an undoubted surge in the last few years, most violent crime in France remains far below the levels in Britain or Germany." (8)

And never mind that the levels of violent crime in the UK and Germany remain but a pale shadow of the violent crime levels here in the United States – the largely undisputed world-heavyweight-champion of violent crime. In the year 2000, the entire nation of France (population 60 million) recorded 1,051 homicides; by way of comparison, Los Angeles County alone (population 9.5 million) recorded a nearly identical number of murders. (9)

Missing from virtually all press accounts of the supposed crimewave sweeping France has been any sort of analysis of the underlying social causes of the relatively mild levels of rising criminality. The *World Socialist Web Site* provided some of the missing context:

"For some years now, successive French governments have been reducing the cost to the state and to employers of unemployment insurance and other social benefits. There are now 2,200,000 unemployed in France, 9 percent of the population. In some areas, youth unemployment approaches 50 percent. An estimated 4 million people live in poverty, including many who have jobs, and France has the highest youth suicide rate in Europe." (10)

The WSWS also reproduced a letter written to the editor of the French daily *Liberation* which reflected the levels of despair and frustration felt by many French youth. The letter read, in part: "We are the first generation since the Second World War to earn less than our parents. Our future is uncertain." (11) Indeed it is, as is the future of all inhabitants of planet Earth.

The erosion of social services, needless to say, is an idea imported from America, so it is hardly surprising that it would be coupled with what the *L.A. Times* described as an eruption of "U.S.-style street violence." (12) Facilitating the rise in high-profile violent crime has been "the increased presence of assault rifles and other heavy weapons smuggled from the Balkans." (13) "Once smugglers enter the European Union, the absence of borders makes for booming business." (14)

It should go without saying that the increased presence of military-style weaponry, particularly in what we like to refer to as the 'inner cities,' has also fueled the rise in "U.S.-

style street violence" right here in the U.S.. It should also go without saying that most of those weapons currently flowing through the Balkans into Europe originate right here in the munitions factories of U.S. 'defense' contractors.

While the erosion of the social safety net and the infusion of guns have certainly led to higher rates of crime, the perception being generated - of violent crime running rampant through the streets of France - is largely an illusion. This illusion is being created by both an unprecedented rise in the occurrence of ultra-violent rampage killings, and a media fixation on crime that is wildly out of proportion to the problem.

That is, alas, the script that has been followed here in America to incrementally push the people to support a right-wing 'law-and-order' agenda that has resulted in a wholesale stripping away of civil rights, due process rights and privacy rights. Accompanying that has been a pronounced race-baiting that has led to rising racial tensions in this country and a prison population composed largely of African-Americans and Hispanics.

It is notable then that the *Los Angeles Times* has commented that among the "most worrisome trends" in France has been "a spreading drug-and-thug culture, especially among the young men of North African descent." (15) Ahhh, yes ... if it wasn't for the inherent criminality of those 'inferior races,' with their penchant for 'gang-banging,' we could lick this crime problem once and for all.

Never mind that the modern-day "drug-and-thug culture" is largely a product of CIA covert operations that dumped a toxic mixture of guns and crack cocaine into the country's 'inner cities' in the 1980s. That is not to say that gangs and gang violence didn't exist before that time. Certainly they did. But just as certain is that the Iran/Contra operations fundamentally changed the nature of crime in America's impoverished neighborhoods, which then became the justification for the complete militarization of 'big city' police departments.

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The WSWS noted that "Outbreaks of extreme violence by desperate individuals are associated in France with the United States. But these problems have increasingly surfaced in France as well. Over the last 10 years there have been at least 17 such incidents, often ending with the suicide of the perpetrator." (16) The *L.A. Times* reported that three such mass murders have been committed just in the last eight months. (17)

The same *Times* report noted that "the French have been shocked by acts of unprecedented viciousness. Headlines speak of brazen cop-killers, gang rapists prowling housing projects, and schoolyard extortionists." (18) The *Guardian* added that: "Near blanket media coverage of incidents of youth crime has helped to keep the issue firmly in the public eye." (19)

Such sensationalized crime reporting, including the demonizing of youth (20), has been a staple of the American print and broadcast media for quite some time, and has aided immeasurably in rallying public support for the rolling back of constitutional protections. As the National Criminal Justice Commission noted in a February 1996 report: "When national news wants to excite viewers, it scours the nation for the day's most titillating crime, and broadcasts it everywhere. The result is a popular sense that rare and extreme crimes happen around every corner." (21)

Vincent Schiraldi, the director of the Justice Policy Institute, explained to the *Christian Science Monitor* in November 1997 how such reporting skews public perception of crime: "For example, since 1993, the homicide rate nationwide dropped by 20%. Yet since 1993, coverage of murders on the ABC, CBS, and NBC evening news increased by an astonishing 721%. As a result, in 1993 alone, the number of Americans ranking crime as the number one problem increased six fold." (22)

And so it is in France as the country heads into a presidential election in which "the leading candidates [and the press] have made law-and-order issues and juvenile delinquency a major theme of their campaigns." (23) Assisting in keeping the people's attention focused on law-and-order issues and the looming menace of violent crime has been a steady stream of those once uniquely American creations – rampage killers.

And just as in America, France's versions of rampage/spree/mass murderers have followed a time-honored script, as though they have all attended the same Rampage Killer Training Academy. With a few minor variations, that script generally reads something like this: a man described as a loner (though the facts frequently contradict that description) suddenly explodes in an orgy of violence, gunning down - in a coldly professional, emotionless manner - as many people as possible, before turning his guns on himself – thereby preempting any sort of a meaningful investigation of the crime and ensuring that the 'evidence' in the case will never be aired in open court.

Richard Durn apparently had read a copy of that script. At 1:15 AM the morning of March 27 - after sitting in the public gallery of Nanterre's city council chambers through some six hours of tedious local political wrangling, and after waiting until all other visitors had cleared out - Durn approached the gathered group of forty or so elected officials without saying a word and opened fire with a dizzying barrage of semi-automatic handgun fire, shooting his initial victims in the back. (24) "The attack was," according to the *BBC's* Paris correspondent, "clearly prepared in advance." (25)

When it was all over, eight local councillors lay dead and another nineteen were wounded (early reports claimed that as many as 30 were wounded). The council chambers were littered with dozens of spent shell casings and, according to a Paris fire brigade spokesman, Captain Laurent Vibert, "There are at least 50 bullet impacts in the council chamber. According to our first reports, he used at least five ammunition clips." (26)

The mass murder was - according to the local mayor, who survived the rampage - "conducted with clinical precision." (27) Press reports were littered with descriptions of a preternaturally calm, emotionally-detached killer.

*The Irish Times* commented that: "Eyewitnesses were struck by Mr Durn's calm, methodical manner." (28) The *BBC* reported that: "The gunman who opened fire on a council meeting in Paris acted methodically and calmly, working his way around the room as he shot his victims, witnesses say." (29) One councillor/witness told the *Guardian* that: "He was shooting at anything that moved ... but he was completely calm." (30)

Other witnesses noted that "Mr Durn did not utter a word while spraying the room with bullets." (31) One unidentified official told the *BBC* that Durn "was very calm. He didn't look like a crazy person at all." (32) Christian Brunet, a councillor/witness, told the *Independent*: "He didn't say a word. He must have used three or four magazines. He had a second pistol in his belt. It was like being in a horror film. He shot the councillors in the front row, coldly, one by one." (33)

It was a performance that seemed to borrow heavily from *The Terminator*: "Witnesses say the man had two or three guns, and was shooting with both hands at once ... Others described how he calmly reloaded his weapons before carrying on." (34) Two of those guns, which Durn was apparently firing simultaneously, were Glock 9mm semi-automatics.

Durn was eventually overpowered – but not without considerable effort. He seemed to be oblivious to attempts by witnesses/victims to stop his rampage: "At least one councillor reportedly threw a chair at the gunman to try to knock him to the ground. Another person tried to wrestle him to the floor. But witnesses said the man never stopped shooting." (35)

One can almost picture Ahhnuld calmly reloading and robotically firing with both hands even as chairs and would-be attackers bounce off of him.

Several councillors ultimately braved the barrage of bullets to disarm and contain Durn. As they did so, the well-armed Durn pulled out yet a third gun, "a .357 magnum handgun

which he fired at those trying to overpower him." (36)

Had he not been stopped, Durn's performance was apparently scheduled to include his own suicide as the final act – most likely to be performed with the .357 he had tucked in his belt and which he produced as soon as he realized that the show was drawing to a close. After being overpowered, he reportedly screamed "kill me, kill me." (37) It was later reported that: "Police said Durn admitted during questioning that he planned to kill himself after gunning down the councillors." (38)

Most press accounts portrayed Durn as the proverbial 'deranged loner' – noting that he was unemployed, unmarried and still living with his mother, and that he had a long history of mental illness. *LeMonde*, for instance, reported that: "He did not have friends, nor a known girlfriend, and he lived with his mother." (39) But Durn did in fact have political connections, and was well-known within the council chambers where the shootings took place.

One witness told the *BBC* that: "He comes to all the council meetings and had no motive to do this." (40) Other witnesses reported that "some councillors had chatted with him before the debate on the local budget." (41) *The Irish Times* held that not only did Durn speak "to several of the men and women he was about to murder ... he joked with some of them." (42) Some of the councillors in the room that night had served alongside of Durn in the local chapter of the League of Human Rights, an organization for which Durn had at one time served as treasurer. (43)

Most media accounts also presented the mass murder as a motiveless, random act of violence. Police referred to it as "motiveless dementia," (44) while prime minister Lionel Jospin spoke of "a case of furious dementia." (45) *The Independent* though talked to some eyewitnesses who said that "Durn selected his targets. They said he seemed to know precisely which councillors he wanted to kill, starting with the Greens and Communists." (46) A later report by *Reuters* claimed that Durn had "intended to kill only the Communist mayor, according to a confession published by *LeParisien* newspaper yesterday." (47)

If Durn's intent was to kill leftists, then he certainly chose the right place to launch his attack. There is certainly no shortage of "Greens and Communists" in Nanterre, which has been described as a "staunchly communist blue-collar suburb" (48) located in "the so-called 'Red Belt' of left-wing municipalities surrounding the capital." (49) *The Independent* offered a bleak description of Nanterre as "a neat, soulless, working-class enclave." (50)

Durn himself was described in most press reports as a leftist, though at least one journalist commented on the fact that his supposed leftist leanings were contradicted by his well-documented fascination with guns. Nevertheless, he apparently registered with the Socialist Party in 1995 before switching to the Green Party in 2001; that same year, he joined the League of Human Rights. (51)

Beyond that, the details of Durn's life remain rather murky. He was the son of an immigrant mother whom he lived with. The identity of his father, interestingly, is said to be unknown. Durn was reportedly highly intelligent and very well educated, with a "history degree and a masters in political sciences." (52) *LeMonde* reported that, at school, "he was exceptionally gifted, so much so that he was bored in class." (53) *The Guardian* concurred, noting that he was: "Considered brilliant at school." (54)

Despite his intelligence and academic prowess, Durn appears to have an almost non-existent employment history and he was unemployed at the time of the shootings. For the past four years, he has spent part of his time going on what were described as "humanitarian" missions to Bosnia and Kosovo. (55) Bosnia and Kosovo, it should be noted, are the focus of an array of Western intelligence-run covert operations, as well as being the source for the military-style guns flooding into Europe – guns not unlike the ones wielded by Richard Durn.

How Durn maintained possession of those guns in a country known for having tough gun control laws remains very much a mystery. As *Time's* European edition noted: "Legally possessing such a weapon is difficult in France," though the magazine purports that: "Durn



qualified because he was an active member of a shooting club in a nearby town." (56)

Many press reports echo the claim that Durn was allowed a license for his guns because he was a sport shooter with a membership in a shooting club. Unmentioned in these reports is the fact that the guns owned by Durn were hardly of the sort used by sport shooters. As the *Independent* correctly noted, the "Glock is a lightweight, hi-tech, automatic pistol used by bodyguards and assassins." (57)

Even if one accepts that these decidedly non-sporting guns were owned for sport shooting, there is still the question of why the guns were not confiscated two years ago, when Durn allowed his license to expire. As Adam Sage wrote in the UK's *The Times*: "Durn had been allowed to keep the guns that he used in the shootings despite the expiry of his three-year firearms licence in 2000." (58)

The expiration of the license alone should have resulted in the confiscation of the weapons. In addition to that, Durn had exhibited what the *L.A. Times* described as "a history of ominous behavior." (59) The *Times* was referring to the fact that, in 1998, Durn had "threatened a psychiatrist with a handgun." (60) And yet, even with this threat to the doctor "at a social security office," his guns still were not confiscated. (61)

There is also the question of why Durn's psychiatric history did not disqualify him from gun ownership. As *The Irish Times* recounted: "He had been under psychiatric care since 1990, and took the anti-depressant drug Prozac." (62) This is, alas, yet another element of the script that they apparently teach at the Rampage Killer Training Academy; the overwhelming majority of America's spree killers have had a fondness for ingesting so-called 'anti-depressant' drugs.

During his twelve years of psychiatric treatment, Durn had reportedly made two suicide attempts and had on at least one occasion been confined to a mental hospital. France's *LeFigaro* marveled at how it was that a man with a lengthy psychiatric history, who had already shown himself to be a danger both to himself and to others, and who was knowingly in illegal possession of three weapons which had been unregistered for over two years, had somehow managed to avoid having those weapons seized. (63)

Durn was, notably, never charged with any crime in connection with his armed threat at a government office. It would seem almost as though someone wanted him roaming the streets of France with his mini-arsenal.

\* \* \* \* \*

After being overpowered in the council chambers, Durn was taken into custody by French police. The young man who had previously been joking with his victims - before coldly and methodically gunning them down - was by that time said to be "speaking incoherently." (64) He reportedly told his captors that he felt "very awkward in his skin" (65), as though - perhaps - he felt he had lost control over his actions.

Shortly after 10:00 AM on the morning of March 28 - 33 hours after Durn unleashed a barrage of bullets inside a building described as an ultra-modern, concrete and glass pyramid - the 33-year-old gunman allegedly committed suicide while being questioned in the Quai des Orfevres, described as "the French equivalent of Scotland Yard." (66)

As the *Associated Press* described it: "Durn was being interrogated in a locked fifth-floor room when he bolted to a closed window, according to [an official police] statement. It said he opened the window and began climbing out." (67) At the time, Durn "was being questioned by two senior officers, a captain and a brigadier, when he was asked to stand up and sign a statement." (68)

According to the official police account: "The two officials tried to stop him by grabbing his legs, but the determination of the suspect, whose body was already mostly out of the

window, thwarted that attempt." (69) The police statement also claimed that: "One officer injured his hand trying to haul [Durn] back in." (70) Once out the window, Durn allegedly scurried across the roof and then plunged to his death.

This official story is, needless to say, not without its problems. Questions have been raised about why the suspect was not handcuffed or otherwise restrained, as well as why he wasn't being held in a secure mental facility rather than a jail (strangely enough, the French apparently recognize that the mentally ill should be treated differently than other suspects).

Perhaps the most obvious question raised is exactly how a man being closely monitored by at least two experienced officers had time to get to a window, open it, and then climb through it before anyone had a chance to restrain him. This is an especially troubling question in light of the fact that the window, variously described as a "fanlight" or a "skylight," was quite small and was located 1.6 meters off the floor (slightly more than five feet). (71)

As a leading Parisian lawyer, Jean-Louis Pelletier, commented to *The Times*: "It is perfectly obvious to everyone that you need time to climb through a skylight." (72) Lucien Batard, the deputy mayor of Nanterre, asked pointedly: "How can you kill yourself at police headquarters? I didn't think that someone at criminal police headquarters would have so much liberty of movement that he could jump out of a window." (73)

Apparently a number of French citizens didn't think so either. *Agence France-Presses* reported that the alleged suicide "caused sharp protests, particularly on behalf of the mayor of Nanterre, Jacqueline Fraysse." (74)

There were obvious signs that a struggle had preceded Durn's 'suicide.' The *Guardian* reported that Durn's body was "missing one shoe and a sock, perhaps as a result of the struggle." (75) *LeMonde* added that the "clothing of Richard Durn was, moreover, drawn backwards." (76) These signs of struggle were universally attributed to the officers' alleged efforts to thwart Durn's suicide, though they could just as easily have been the result of Durn's captors' efforts to *assist* in his 'suicide.'

John Lichfield wrote in the *Independent* that Durn's timely suicide assured that "the massacre in the suburban council chamber may never be fully explained." (77) Just as, one might note, the death while in police custody of that most famous of 'deranged loners,' Lee Harvey Oswald, assured that the shootings in Dallas would never be fully explained.

Mayor Fraysse observed that "there will be no trial. The families will not know. They had a right to know." (78) Indeed they did, as did the families of the victims of so many of America's rampage killers who have self-destructed before their stories could be told.

John Lichfield wrote in the *Independent* that Durn "joins a long list of mass killers, including ... Mark Barton, a day trader in Atlanta who killed his family and then nine others at his office in 1999, James Huberty who killed 21 people in a McDonald's restaurant in San Diego in 1984, and Charles Whitman who shot dead 16 people from a tower at the University of Texas in 1966." (79)

None of these men, who were notably all Americans, survived to stand trial. The families of their victims are still waiting to hear what really motivated their murderous rampages. There is some indication that at least one of these legendary mass murderers, Charles Whitman, had received intelligence training while serving as a Marine. (80)

It doesn't seem entirely out of line to ponder whether Richard Durn was a covert intelligence operative. While hard evidence is lacking, there is a circumstantial case to be made: his murky family history, sketchy employment records, documented political connections, questionable leftist credentials, inexplicably lax treatment by law enforcement officials, and mysterious sojourns to the Balkans all point in that direction.

*Time* proclaimed that: "Last week's mass murder of eight city councilors in a Paris suburb ... set France searching for political meaning in a fundamentally senseless act." (81) But was it a senseless act, or was it an overtly political act? Aren't all 'rampage' killings, in the final analysis, political acts? They certainly, at the very least, are exploited for political gain.

Durn's shooting rampage is expected to have very specific political consequences, which were spelled out in an April 3 report from the *BBC*. Even while claiming that in "normal circumstances, of course, a massacre by a disturbed individual would play no part in a general debate on crime" (a dubious claim at best), reporter Sheila Bartner wrote that: "But when Richard Durn carried out his murderous attack, he may have inadvertently done more than unleash grief and tragedy in this pleasant Paris suburb. It is just possible he has intervened decisively in the French presidential election ... Mr Chirac may have two trump cards after Nanterre – his stronger image on law and order, and his traditional role as a man of the people ... The tragedy of Nanterre allows Mr Chirac to play both cards. If Mr Chirac can avoid over-playing it, then Richard Durn may just have dealt him a winning hand." (82)

A winning hand that he wouldn't otherwise have held. Prior to the Durn affair, Chirac was trailing in the polls behind the country's Socialist prime minister, Lionel Jospin – despite persistent attacks from the right on Jospin's alleged "poor record on crime." (83) Chirac has been, notably, "campaigning on a 'zero-tolerance' law and order stance similar to that of New York." (84)

Similar, that is, to the agenda implemented by Mayor Rudolf Giuliani – widely viewed as an overtly fascist agenda before Rudy was resurrected by the media as 'America's Mayor' in the wake of the September 11 attacks.

Numerous prominent voices of the right in France quickly seized upon the Nanterre massacre. Presidential candidate Alain Madelin, for example, said "the killing spree exemplified French society's dangerous drift toward 'American-style violence.'" (85) How better to remedy that than through the implementation of American-style fascism?

Bruno Megret of the National Movement, described by the *Independent* as one of France's more "extreme right-wing voices," insisted that "Durn's actions were part of a 'collapse of traditional values, a descent into barbarism.'" (86) Such language has been a staple of far-right opinion shapers here in the United States for quite some time.

If these voices of the right carry the day in France, then Richard Durn will do for Jacques Chirac what Willie Horton did for George H.W. Bush.

As for Jospin, he has, "like many French leftwingers ... long tried to play down the law-and-order issue as a rightwing, or even far-right, scare tactic." For that reason, according to the *Guardian*, "as he seeks to stop Mr Chirac from running away with the election's crunch issue, he remains more or less stuck with the left's traditional view that crime is partly the fault of society, whereas the right sees the offender as wholly responsible." (87)

It can be quite a burden to be "stuck" with promoting the truth when one is embroiled in a political campaign based on lies, smears, and disinformation aimed at discrediting those voices that do attempt to speak the truth about such issues as the causes of crime. Fortunately for our politicians here in America, such burdens don't exist since nobody even pretends to want to tell the truth. That, of course, doesn't stop the 'right' from relentlessly attacking what passes for the 'left' for being 'soft on crime.'

The attacks of last September 11, probably the most highly-publicized mass murder of all time, have been used by the illegitimate Bush administration to solidify support among the American people for a decidedly reactionary agenda, and to cast the previous - purportedly 'leftist' - administration as 'soft on terrorism.' In the same way, the attack in Nanterre is being used to push the French electorate to the right.

Perhaps it is appropriate then that among the "scores of police and firefighters" who were brought in to assist with tending to the victims in the Nanterre council chambers was a "contingent of New York City firemen currently visiting the Paris area." (88) It always helps to have people on-hand with experience in dealing with the aftermath of choreographed tragedies.

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*The Center for an Informed America*

## **NEWSLETTER #21**

***Special Edition: Was Wellstone Whacked?***

***November 5, 2002***

Greetings, once again, to all subscribers!

Two years ago, I wrote the following words: "October 16th is not, as it turns out, a good day to travel by air if you happen to be a politician who has become, shall we say, troublesome." October 16, 2000 was, for those suffering from that peculiarly American malady known as "lack of historical memory," the day that populist (relatively speaking) Senatorial candidate Mel Carnahan's chartered plane allegedly crashed due to inclement weather.

(<http://davesweb.cnchost.com/regressive.htm>)

Now it seems that October 25 is also not a good day to travel by air if you happen to be a democratically-minded Senatorial candidate, as the Wellstone family has just learned the hard way. Widely regarded, accurately or not, as the most progressive voice in the U.S. Senate, Wellstone has just succumbed to "small chartered plane carrying left-leaning politician meets inclement weather" syndrome.

And there will be no repeat of the "Corpse Beats John Ashcroft and Gains Senate Seat for Widow" scenario, since Wellstone's wife and daughter were killed along with the Minnesota Senator in what the media would like us to believe was a tragic accident that was not, of course, in any way suspicious.

At the time of his demise, Mr. Wellstone was uniquely poised to reveal the lies and fraudulence of the Washington establishment and their media cohorts, by virtue of the fact that he was the only Senator in a contested race to vote against the Congressional resolution that unconstitutionally transferred war-making power to the executive office.

By casting a dissenting vote, Wellstone had committed political suicide -- or so said all the Washington spinmeisters. As George Bush likes to say, "America speaks with one voice" on the issue of waging genocidal war against the Iraqi people. And the media, of course, don't really bother to challenge such specious claims.

Paul Wellstone though opted to speak with a different voice, thereby allegedly guaranteeing his political demise. To hasten that demise, his opponent was reportedly hand-picked and enthusiastically endorsed by Boy George himself, and was supplied with truck loads of campaign money.

(<http://www.startribune.com/stories/587/3382739.html>)

But a strange thing appeared to be happening: Wellstone seemed to be on his way to electoral victory. Contrary to Washington spin, Wellstone had gotten a large boost in his poll numbers as a direct result of his vote on the Iraqi resolution. But how could that be? How could a maverick Senator who had chosen to voice such an 'unpopular' opinion actually gain support?

The vast majority of Wellstone's allegedly 'Democratic' colleagues chose to give a thumbs-up to transferring war-making power to the White House, despite being inundated with correspondence from constituents who strongly opposed the measure.

(<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20021003-851543.htm>)

It has been almost universally proclaimed by pols and pundits that these 'Democrats' lined up behind Bush on the war resolution (as they had on the Patriot Act, and the resolution authorizing the use of force in Afghanistan, and various other reactionary measures) because it was the "politically expedient" thing to do.

Wellstone's reelection would have revealed this 'conventional wisdom' to be a craven lie. As the hopelessly compromised *Nation* put it in a posting from May of 2002, "If [Wellstone] wins, a blow will be struck not just against the Bush machine but against those in the Democratic Party who argue for tepid moderation."

(<http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=20020527&s=nichols>)

In truth, the blow would have been struck against the entire, and entirely fraudulent, Democratic Party -- which doesn't argue for "tepid moderation," but is in fact wholly complicit in advancing the increasingly fascistic agenda of Team Bush. As Michael I. Niman argued, in a posting on *AlterNet*, a Wellstone victory "would both be an embarrassment to the Bush administration and to Democratic Quislings such as Hillary Clinton who voted to support 'the president.'"

(<http://www.alternet.org/story.html?StoryID=14399>)

Even without a Wellstone victory, the Democratic Party has largely revealed itself for the fraud that it is by failing to follow up on what it claimed was one of the "politically expedient" reasons for green-lighting an attack on Iraq and beyond: to enable the party to shift the focus of the campaign onto domestic issues, where Bush is said to be vulnerable.

Now maybe I've been in a coma or something, but I don't recall any Democratic candidates challenging their Republican rivals on the current state of the economy, or on the massive tax cuts handed out to corporate America, or on the direct connections of various members of the Bush mob to massive corporate scandals, or on the rollbacks of environmental safeguards, or on the decidedly anti-labor stance of the White House, or on the repeated attacks on civil liberties, or on the erosion of the separation between church and state, or on the blocking of any meaningful inquiry into what happened on September 11, or on the failure to investigate the anthrax attacks, or on the failure to capture bin Laden despite laying waste to the nation of Afghanistan, or ....

It is clearly not the case, as *The Nation* claimed, that "most Democrats are still trying to figure out how to challenge a popular President" -- but rather that most Democrats are trying to figure out how to continue to masquerade as some sort of legitimate opposition party even while signing off on every police-state measure and every imperialistic military venture that has been proposed by the administration.

So while there may be some truth to *The Nation's* contention that "getting rid of Wellstone is a passion for Rove, Dick Cheney, George W. Bush and the special-interest lobbies that fund the most sophisticated political operation ever assembled by a presidential administration," it is arguable whether it was not the 'Democrats' who had the most to gain from Wellstone's death.



The reality is that Wellstone did nothing to slow down the Bush juggernaut, and wasn't exactly the principled leftist that he is made out to be. He had no problem signing off on the Patriot Act or the resolution authorizing the brutal assault upon the nation of Afghanistan, and had little or nothing to say about the brazen theft of the presidential election or the evidence indicating that the official story of what happened on September 11 is almost entirely a work of fiction.

And even on those issues where Wellstone did take a stand in opposition to the White House, the effects of his actions were negligible. Since Bush took office, and certainly since September 11, 2001, there has not been a vote in Congress on any resolution of any significance that has not gone overwhelmingly in the Bush administration's favor.

So it seems to me that the 'Democrats' had as much or more to gain as did the 'Republicans' by terminating Wellstone's political career -- though that of course assumes that 'Democrats' refers to an identifiable group that is separate and distinct from the 'Republican' Party, and that there is more than one political orientation represented in Washington.

And that, of course, really isn't the case. But it is of supreme importance to maintain the illusion that that is the case. And Paul Wellstone was threatening to partially shatter that illusion by stripping away some of the lies that the 'Democrats' have been hiding behind.

It would probably be more accurate then to say that the Washington establishment, as a whole, had a motive for eliminating Paul Wellstone. So ... was he whacked?

It seems a fair question to ask, though the conspiracy bashers on the fake left have been working overtime to launch what is essentially a pre-emptive strike against anyone who dares to pose such questions.

([http://twincities.indymedia.org/front.php3?article\\_id=7814&group=webcast](http://twincities.indymedia.org/front.php3?article_id=7814&group=webcast) and <http://www.salon.com/news/col/sullivan/2002/10/30/wellstone/?x>)

The speed with which the debunkers have issued their missives, and the vehemence with which they have insisted that only those on the lunatic fringe would speculate that Wellstone's demise was due to anything other than a tragic accident, is enough to make a skeptic wonder if there isn't something to hide.

Postulating that foul play was involved does not, it should be noted, necessarily imply the guilt of the Bush administration, or of any other players in Washington. As was seen during the DC sniper case, and during the anthrax mailings (to name just two examples), Washington and the media are quick these days to blame almost any tragedy or act of violence on 'terrorism.'

And yet, as *USA Today* was quick to report, "FBI spokesman Paul McCabe said there was no indication the crash was related to terrorism." This proclamation was made, of course, before any sort of an investigation had even begun, and while we were being told that it would take months to determine the cause of the crash.

([http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2002-10-25-plane-down-minnesota\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2002-10-25-plane-down-minnesota_x.htm))

With the wreckage still smoldering, the *Star Tribune* reported that Acting NTSB Chairman Carol Carmody "refused to speculate on what happened in the crash, but said NTSB specialists would be looking at all aspects of the accident, including weather, the engines,

human performance, the plane's structure and airworthiness of the aircraft."  
(<http://www.startribune.com/stories/1752/3390667.html>)

Conspicuously missing from that list, and apparently ruled out before the investigation even began, was sabotage. So much for "looking at all aspects of the accident." But then again, why would you look at that possibility when you are "looking at all aspects of the *accident*"? You would only look for that if you were looking at all aspects of the *crash*, to determine if it was in fact an accident. And Carmody, of course, isn't doing that.

Carmody, by the way, who is now serving as the spokeswoman for what has been referred to as the NTSB's "Go Team," has a rather interesting history. Her official NTSB biography proudly proclaims that her career has included "serving at the Central Intelligence Agency."  
([http://www.nts.gov/Abt\\_NTSB/bios/carmody.htm](http://www.nts.gov/Abt_NTSB/bios/carmody.htm))

That should set everyone's mind at ease -- as should the fact that she "has been [an] on-scene member at several accidents, including the aircraft accident which killed Governor Carnahan in October 2000."

Joining Carmody, as the lead investigator on the case, is Robert Benzon, whose previous claim to fame was leading the cover-up ... oops, that must have been some kind of Freudian slip, because what I meant to say is that he led the *investigation* into the cause of the November 12, 2001 crash of American Airlines flight 587 into a neighborhood in Belle Harbor, New York.  
(<http://www.nts.gov/events/2001/AA587/default.htm>)

Benzon began his aviation career in the jungles of Vietnam, where he served on a secretive Tactical Electronics Warfare Squadron, according to his own account: "I served as a 2nd Lt, then 1st Lt copilot in the 362 TEWS at DaNang AB during 1972 and 1973. We closed the unit down several months after the spring of 1973 cease fire agreement. Interestingly, we continued to fly missions from DaNang after the cease fire with South Vietnamese markings on the airplanes. I never did fully understand that little maneuver. I went on to fly as a copilot and aircraft commander in KC-135s, shot through the ranks to Captain, and went off active duty in 1980 or so. I'm now an aircraft accident investigator for the National Transportation Safety Board."  
(<http://www.ec47.com/returns3.htm>)

It's interesting to note here that Benzon writes that he went off active duty "in 1980 *or so*." Does he not know when he went off active duty? Perhaps Benzon operates in that murky world where the lines between 'active duty' and 'plausible deniability' are a little fuzzy.

Ooops ... I guess that by speculating about such things I have qualified myself for a fitting for a "tin foil hat." Or did I already qualify myself for membership in that club simply by questioning whether the crash of Wellstone's plane *might* have been due to something other than an accident, rather than boldly insisting, absent any corroborating evidence, that it definitely was an accident -- which is apparently considered intelligent political discourse?

So what does the evidence suggest in the Wellstone crash? Details are sketchy at best at this point. There are, of course, the usual glaring contradictions in the early reports that we have all grown accustomed to.

All avenues of the media, for example, are in agreement that there were no voice or flight recorders on the plane, thus denying investigators a key piece of evidence. Early reports, however, claimed that there was indeed a voice recorder on the aircraft, and that it was actively being searched for.

The *Star Tribune*, for instance, reported that Carmody had "said investigators would be searching for the cockpit voice recorder as they sought to determine what happened." The recorder was said to be "key to learning more about the crash." *USA Today* concurred, noting that "Carmody said the first priority was finding the cockpit voice recorder."

(<http://www.startribune.com/stories/1752/3390667.html> and [http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2002-10-25-plane-down-minnesota\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2002-10-25-plane-down-minnesota_x.htm))

It is possible that Carmody was mistaken about the existence of a cockpit voice recorder, though one would think that the Acting Chairman of the NTSB, with "more than 20 years experience with the aviation community," including "11 years at the FAA," would know about such things.

([http://www.nts.gov/Abt\\_NTSB/bios/carmody.htm](http://www.nts.gov/Abt_NTSB/bios/carmody.htm))

You've got to wonder why they even bother with those 'black boxes.' They either aren't on board when you need them to be, or they manage to get destroyed in the crash, despite being virtually indestructible. Go figure.

There is also some question as to where exactly the plane crashed. The *Washington Post*, for one, claimed that the "FAA said the plane crashed in trees about two miles short of the runway. Wreckage was spread over a wide area, indicating that it did not nose into the ground but crashed at a relatively flat angle."

(<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A17030-2002Oct25.html>)

Such reports strongly implied that the plane simply came up short on its landing, hitting trees rather than a runway. Was the FAA simply mistaken, or did it deliberately try to misrepresent the crash?

Later reports, such as this one from *CNN.com*, place the location of the wreckage elsewhere: "tree damage around the crash site indicated the plane, which should have been landing from the east on an east-west runway, was actually turning away from the airport, traveling from northwest to southeast about 2 miles south of the runway, when it crashed."

(<http://www.cnn.com/2002/US/Midwest/10/26/wellstone.investigation/index.html>; see also <http://www.grandforks.com/mld/grandforks/news/4372594.htm>)

The *CNN* report also holds that the "angle of tree damage showed a descent much steeper than would be expected with a controlled landing," while a posting on the *WSWS* website mentions that there were eyewitness accounts of "a near vertical plunge."

(<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/oct2002/well-o29.shtml>)

The *WSWS* report also noted that "none of the typical causes of a small plane accident - engine failure, icing, pilot error - appear to be involved." These are largely the same causes that Carmody claimed to be looking at: "weather, the engines, human performance, the plane's structure and airworthiness of the aircraft."

The media has for the most part pointed to the weather as the most likely culprit. Several reports though dispute the notion that the weather was to blame for the crash. The *St. Paul*

*Pioneer Press* reported that the airport's manager "said the weather was overcast with light snow and a temperature of 31 but was well within the landing limits at the airport."  
(<http://www.grandforks.com/mld/grandforks/news/4372594.htm>)

*USA Today* talked to a pilot, Don Sipola, who told them that "visibility in the area at the time of the crash was 2.50 miles, well above the one-mile minimum for a standard instrument landing."  
([http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2002-10-25-plane-down-minnesota\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2002-10-25-plane-down-minnesota_x.htm))

A newsletter sent out by Mike Ruppert quotes the following exchange, between correspondent Wolf Blitzer and a local reporter, that was aired on *CNN*:

Reporter: There is no evidence that weather had anything to do with the crash.

Blitzer: But the plane was flying into some sort of ice storm, was it not?

Reporter: There is no evidence that the weather had anything to do with the crash.

According to Ruppert, *CNN* quickly cut away from this reporter, who was never heard from again.

As further indication that the weather at the time of the crash wasn't nearly as bad as the media would have us believe, and wasn't likely the cause of the crash, it has been reported that "two smaller Beech Queen Air planes had landed at Eveleth without incident two hours before the crash, when temperatures were colder."

(<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/oct2002/well-o29.shtml> and  
<http://www.twincities.com/mld/pioneerpress/news/local/4371837.htm>)

There was certainly no indication from the plane's crew that they were having trouble with the weather -- or any trouble of any kind, for that matter. *The Pioneer Press* reported that "there was no distress call or any indication of trouble before the plane went down about 10:20 a.m."  
(<http://www.grandforks.com/mld/grandforks/news/4372594.htm>)

This was in spite of the fact that the aircraft had been in radio contact just two minutes before it plowed into the ground. According to the *New York Times*, during that last transmission, at 10:18 a.m., "there was no evidence on the controller's part or from the pilot's voice that there was any difficulty, no reported problems, no expressed concern."  
(<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/28/politics/28CRAS.html>)

No expressed concern about, for instance, icing, though the media has been rife with speculation that icing could have played a role in the crash. The King Air A100, as the *Washington Post* noted, "is equipped with numerous de-icing systems. Wings and tail surfaces are equipped with pneumatic de-icing 'boots' that inflate and deflate repeatedly to break ice from the leading edges of these surfaces. The plane's engine intakes are protected by electric heating elements, as are propeller surfaces. Fuel is heated automatically."  
(<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A17030-2002Oct25.html>)

It seems unlikely then that icing was a major contributor to the crash, unless the aircraft's multiple de-icing systems failed, and the aircraft's warning systems failed to notify the pilots of those failures -- but if that were the case, then perhaps the most likely explanation would be sabotage, and that has, of course, already been ruled out.

The King Air A100 is said to have a very good safety record, with the last fatal crashes occurring six years ago. Strangely, there were two such fatal crashes involving the A100 just eleven days apart in December of 1997. Even more strangely, one of those two crashes was of a plane that was owned by the very same charter company that owns the plane that Wellstone was killed in.

As the *Pioneer Press* reported, the 1997 crash that killed two Minnesota men, and that bore "some eerie similarities to Friday's accident ... involved a King Air owned by Aviation Charter, Inc., of Eden Prairie. That company has the same business address and CEO as Beech Transportation." Beech Transportation, of course, is the owner of the plane that was carrying Wellstone.

(<http://www.twincities.com/mld/pioneerpress/news/local/4371837.htm>)

So as long as the King Air planes are not owned by this particular charter company, and don't happen to be carrying residents of the state of Minnesota, they are known to be very safe and reliable aircraft.

The particular King Air plane carrying the Wellstone family "had only two reports of problems in its [23-year] history, according to the FAA. Both were in March 1996 and were problems with worn fuel cutoff levers that were replaced with the recommendation for more frequent inspections."

(<http://www.twincities.com/mld/pioneerpress/news/local/4371837.htm>)

We have thus far covered weather, icing, and the structure and airworthiness of the plane as likely causes of the crash. Next up is engine failure. That one, alas, doesn't seem very likely either.

The *New York Times* held that "Officials have said that both of the plane's engines showed blade damage, which they said suggested that the engines were running when the plane crashed," while *CNN* noted that Carmody voiced the same conclusion: "propeller damage indicates the engines may still have been operating at the time of the crash."

(<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/28/politics/28CRAS.html> and <http://www.cnn.com/2002/US/Midwest/10/26/wellstone.investigation/index.html>)

The only other typical cause of small plane crashes is pilot error, and that also doesn't seem very likely. Though only required to have a single pilot, Wellstone's plane had two pilots on board, and both were fully qualified to fly the aircraft. The primary pilot, Captain Richard Conry, held an "airline transport pilot certification -- the highest certification a pilot can receive."

(<http://www.twincities.com/mld/pioneerpress/news/local/4371837.htm>)

It appears as though the WWS was right then in concluding that none of the typical causes of small aircraft crashes appear to apply in this case. That is not to say that they can be definitively ruled out -- just that they don't initially appear to be applicable.

Wellstone, in other words, appears to have been in good hands with regards to the choice of aircraft and the flight crew, and the flying conditions - while less than ideal - were well within the abilities of the plane and its crew. And yet, in just two minutes time, with no distress calls and no warning, something went horribly wrong.

Casting doubt on the most likely causes of an accidental crash does not, of course, prove that an alternative theory - such as sabotage - is true. Neither, for that matter, does placing the crash in its proper context in light of recent history, though it seems appropriate to do so.

Though not widely reported, Wellstone was apparently previously targeted for assassination while visiting Colombia in December of 2000, which of course was right after Mel Carnahan's plane fell out of the sky just a few weeks before election day.

(<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/world/DailyNews/colombia001201.html>, <http://www.counterpunch.org/pipermail/counterpunch-list/2000-December/004162.html>, and <http://www.fas.org/irp/news/2000/12/irp-001201-col.htm>)

As has already been forgotten by the media, Congress was shut down for a period of time just after the September 11 attacks due to the anthrax mailings -- widely portrayed at the time as yet more 'terrorist' doings, and now rarely talked about at all.

And who was it that was targeted by those mailings? Two of the most prominent Democrats in the Senate: Tom Daschle and Patrick Leahy. These were not likely meant to be successful attacks, by the way, since Daschle and Leahy are good team players, but rather were probably meant as a warning to others.

Some have theorized that Flight 93, which never made it to its intended target on September 11, was scheduled for an attack on Congress. If so, were the anthrax attacks meant to do the job that Flight 93 failed to accomplish -- put the fear of God into Congress and force the temporary closure of the legislative body?

More recently, the House considered legislation that would enable the quick replacement - which is to say, replacement without going through the bother of checking with the voters - of House members in order to maintain "continuity of government" in the event of - what else? - some sort of terrorist attack.

(This legislation was discussed in an *L.A. Times* article from October 2, 2002, the link to which no longer works.)

This legislation could very easily be perceived, by any dissenters in the legislative crowd, as a not-so-subtle warning that they can be quite easily replaced with hand-picked stand-ins.

When viewed on a continuum then, with the attempted assassination of Wellstone, what is widely perceived to be the assassination of Carnahan, the possible (and, admittedly, entirely speculative) targeting of Congress on September 11, the attack on Congress just after September 11, and the House legislation allowing for rapid replacement of members who might suddenly find themselves victims of a terrorist attack, it is only natural to speculate on whether the Wellstone crash was something other than an accident.

So what are we to make of all this? We can, through a process of elimination, narrow the options on the causes of the crash, but we cannot then conclude that the plane was in fact sabotaged (or shot down, as evidence at the Carnahan crash site seemed to indicate).

We can speculate that assassinating Wellstone fits in with what seems to be a systematic effort to quell any and all dissent in Congress, but that likewise doesn't allow us to reach a definitive conclusion.



So the key question, if we are to construct a case built on something more than speculation and circumstantial evidence, is: has any direct evidence surfaced that there was foul play involved in the crash?

There are a couple of tidbits of information that point in that direction.

There were reports, for instance, of what Carmody herself referred to as "an intense post-crash fire." The *Pioneer Press* quoted airport manager Gary Ulman as saying that the plane, broken into several scattered pieces, was engulfed in fire that "was still burning five hours after the crash."

(<http://www.cnn.com/2002/US/Midwest/10/26/wellstone.investigation/index.html> and <http://www.grandforks.com/mld/grandforks/news/4372594.htm>; see also [http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2002-10-25-plane-down-minnesota\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2002-10-25-plane-down-minnesota_x.htm))

And there was one letter writer to the WWS who says that there "was at least one witness, a blond haired man who said he saw a flash of light at the rear of the plane. This was on *CNN*. Saw him once and that was it."

(<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/nov2002/well-n02.shtml>)

Of course, this claim, as with that of Mike Ruppert's correspondents, cannot be verified unless someone happened to catch it on videotape. But neither should these accounts be dismissed out of hand. It is in fact the case that the cable news networks run live footage that contradicts what later emerges as the official story. The networks invariably then proceed to pretend as though the offending footage never aired.

So ... was Wellstone whacked? The only way to definitively answer that question is through a full investigation of the crash -- preferably one not run by a former CIA analyst and a former electronic warfare specialist who both have experience in issuing questionable reports on the causes of high-profile aircraft crashes.

And now, I leave you with this cryptic posting that has been circulating of late, and that was purportedly first posted in May of 2001. If so, the pseudonymous poster made some uncannily accurate predictions. Of course, this could also be a hoax created after the fact and pre-dated.

The missive claims that several Senators were being "evaluated" for possible assassination. The means of assassination was being "narrowed down to one of several choices. One being a carefully planned 'plane crash.' Another is through the delivery of certain biological agents to the Senator."

(<http://www.voxnyc.com/archives/senator-assassination.html>)

The author specified that if a biological approach was used, it would most likely be an "Anthrax hit." Also specified in the posting is that if "the death occurs just prior to the midterm senatorial elections, expect it to be in a state with a close race. Expect a 'Mel Carnahan' style hit."

Strange but true, or just a hoax? I couldn't tell you, but I pass it along for whatever it's worth.

## **NEWSLETTER #30**

*February 26, 2003*



***Protest Sign of the Week***

Sorry once again for the delay in getting this newsletter out. It took me considerably more time than I thought it would to wrap my house in duct tape and plastic sheeting to ward off a biological attack. It wasn't easy, but I think I've finally got the place airtight now.

At first, I was just going to create one 'safe room,' like the friendly people on TV advised me to do. But I'm a little claustrophobic, so I decided to just seal the entire interior of the house. And then, for added protection, I sealed the outside as well.

The neighbors seemed a bit perplexed, until I told them all that we were tenting the house for termites. I think they're getting a little suspicious though, since it's been 'tenting' for a couple of weeks now, and we've been living in it the whole time.

The living room has been converted into a decontamination chamber, so getting in and out is a hassle, but I feel a whole lot safer. I just hope that the attack, when it comes, doesn't last very long, because I've noticed that my home, while now completely free of all toxins, is also noticeably lacking in oxygen.



But the important thing is that I am prepared for the terrorist attack that the good folks at Homeland Security assure us is coming. And I have no doubt that it is indeed coming. The terrorists have, after all (and we're talking about the real terrorists here, by the way, not the imaginary ones), been rather unrelenting in their attacks, especially since September 11, 2001.

They have attacked Afghanistan, they have attacked the Constitution, they have attacked the Bill of Rights, they have attacked the right to vote and to have that vote counted, they have attacked the environment and Social Security and Medicare and ...

Now they are preparing to attack Iraq. And there is a certain sense, it seems to me, of *deja vu* in the air. The attack has been planned for too long to not proceed; the Bush Brigades will not back down. The problem is that, despite rather valiant and creative efforts, Team Bush hasn't been able to sell this unprovoked war to an American, or to an international, audience.

It's much like the situation they would have been facing a couple of years ago if they had just decided, suddenly and for no readily apparent reason, to start selling the public on the idea of launching a massive assault on the nation of Afghanistan. That was, of course, also an attack that had been planned long in advance.

As it turned out though, the Afghan 'war' was an exceptionally easy sell, particularly after a bunch of crazed Saudis managed to crash airplanes into the WTC towers in such a precise way that the towers both collapsed in spectacularly choreographed implosions, all covered on live television.

And so it wasn't surprising that Team Bush had no problem whipping up immediate and nearly universal public support for bombing the piss out of Afghanistan. Actually, it was a *little* surprising, since the alleged hijackers were almost all Saudis, which doesn't really, on the surface, seem to translate to a rationale for bombing and occupying Afghanistan.

But let's not dwell on that. The point here is that, without 9-11, the Bush team's script for the pummeling of Afghanistan (a script which predated the alleged provocation) would have been a tough sell, both at home and internationally ... much like the situation that we find ourselves in today.

I notice that a little piece of legislation that has been dubbed 'Patriot Act II' is being floated around, promising yet further sweeping attacks by the terrorists on our alleged democratic rights. And if I recall correctly, the first Patriot Act had been bouncing around for some time before September 11, 2001, but it wasn't the kind of thing that anyone was going to try to sell to the American people.

(Patriot II: <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2003/feb2003/poli-f22.shtml>, <http://www.public-i.org/dtaweb/report.asp?ReportID=502&L1=10&L2=10&L3=0&L4=0&L5=0>, <http://reuters.com/newsArticle.jhtml?type=politicsNews&storyID=2192053>, <http://www.pbs.org/now/politics/lewis.htm>, and <http://www.aclu.org/SafeandFree/SafeandFree.cfm?ID=11835&c=206>.)

So there we were in 2001, holding one script for launching a blatantly illegal, unprovoked attack on the nation of Afghanistan, and another script for launching a blatantly unconstitutional, wholesale attack on democratic rights, but neither of them were likely to find much support with the public.

But then along came some hijacked airliners ... and suddenly *everything changed*.

And now here we are in 2003, holding one script for launching a blatantly illegal, unprovoked attack on the nation of Iraq, and another script for launching a blatantly unconstitutional, wholesale attack on democratic rights, but neither of them are likely to find much support with the public.

Unless ... those hijacked airliners make a return engagement, or something else occurs that will suitably inflame public opinion against ... well, against whomever Washington chooses to point a finger at, both inside and outside these borders.

That's why I have my house sealed up tight. Quite frankly, these terrorists seem a little desperate to me. They've tried everything imaginable to sell their 'war' script, but have failed miserably. There's no telling what they'll try next.

Their psy-war attacks, in the form of increasingly frantic 'terrorism alerts,' have become laughably predictable. The false arrests to create the illusion of breaking up terrorist 'cells' around the world, maybe even right in your own neighborhood, are heavy-handed and obvious. And the menacing Osama bin Laden tapes have been overplayed, to say the least. Yet another new one would be about as welcome as another Michael Jackson television special.

All of which begs the rather obvious question: how much longer do you think it will be before that strange little triangular thing on Michael Jackson's face atrophies and just falls off, leaving him with no nose at all -- which could conceivably, though by no means necessarily, leave him looking even more bizarre than he already does?

What does Michael's plastic surgeon say when the Gloved One strolls in to see about getting a little bit more of his nose shaved off? Does he agree that it's a good idea? "You know, Michael, your nose is much smaller than it was when you were a young black man, and it's smaller than it was when you were a young white man, but I think it's still a little too large for the androgynous alien look that you're going for now. How much should we take off this time? I *would* suggest that we take it all off, but I can make a lot more money if we just keep taking a little bit off at a time. And how about the lips? There's still a little bit there that can come off. And maybe we should start trimming back the ears. What do you think?"

Anyway, the real point is that Washington has been unable to generate any appreciable level of support for its imperial ambitions, unable to produce or fabricate any sort of convincing evidence, unable to generate a level of fear sufficient to herd to flock, and unable to enlist the support of allies who must posture for the home crowd -- due to the fact that they have to face elections where actual ballots are cast and counted.

(unlike, for instance, elections elsewhere: <http://www.commondreams.org/views03/0131-01.htm> and <http://www.blackboxvoting.com/Georgia-fix.html>)

And yet, there is little doubt that the attack on Iraq will proceed, and the Son of the Patriot Act will become the law of the land -- one way or another.

That is why there is a real possibility that the terrorists may strike again. And when they do, it may be in L.A. The reason I say that is because one of the terrorists has managed to infiltrate the highest levels of the LAPD. I'm talking here, of course, about the new police chief, William Bratton.

Amazingly, almost no one seems to have noticed that such a high-profile terrorist has assumed control of the LAPD. These terrorists are sneaky that way. But I'm on to him. I'm pretty sure that he was sent here to lay the groundwork for the attack and its aftermath.

That's why I loaded up a cart at Home Depot with duct tape and plastic sheeting.

Luckily, I work in construction, so it didn't raise too many eyebrows when I did so. "Just protecting one of his jobs from the rain," the Depot staffers probably said to themselves, "or maybe doing some asbestos abatement work. He's definitely not one of those wackos who's preparing for a biological attack."

That business about working in construction, by the way, is true. And that is the real reason that this newsletter didn't make it out in a timely manner. My day job of late hasn't left much time for my night job.

I mention this because some readers have some rather peculiar notions about who I am. One of you wrote recently to ask me, in strictest confidence, if I didn't in fact also write as David Icke, Chuck Grossman (of *Yellow Times*), and some other writer whose name now escapes me.

I guess it would be futile to deny it. It's all me. I also do Mike Ruppert and Steve Gowans (that one's kind of obvious -- I was running out of names and just said "screw it; I'm just going to drop the 'Mc' -- nobody will figure it out") and me and another guy trade off doing Jared Israel (I write the good stuff, and the other guy writes the shitty stuff).

You're not buying that story? Well ... let's see what else I have for you. How about this: some readers think that I might be a spook. Sometimes they come right out and ask: "Are you a spook?" Other times they smugly assert that they know that I am. One reader was actually hoping that I was. That, he said, would be "kind of cool."

Unfortunately for that particular reader, I am not that cool. I do kind of feel like a spook at times though. Or maybe an anti-spook. Something like that. What that means, essentially, is that I have become rather adept at leading a double life.

I have the perfect cover during the day -- a rather mundane, nondescript, working stiff, suburban existence -- closer to *Ozzie and Harriet* than to *The Osbournes*, except that when dad leaves the house, he actually has to go to work. Because that, you see, is how the bills are paid.

Speaking of the Osbournes, by the way, exactly how dysfunctional do you have to be for *Ozzy Osbourne* to publicly question your fitness as a parent? Oops, sorry, I guess I already milked the Michael Jackson angle, didn't I?

What I wanted to say is that, as hard to believe as it may be, I actually do have a real job. The kind that you have to go to every day, sometimes even on weekends. The kind that basically suck, but you have to go every day anyway, because ranting and raving on the Internet about the rampant corruption and criminality of the Bush administration, while obviously a job of great importance, is not rewarded in Western culture the way that, say, banging nails is.

Yeah, I know, that really is a sad story. It probably could use some violin accompaniment. Unfortunately, I don't know how to add sounds to my postings.

The point of this is ... oh, who am I kidding? I don't even know what the point is. I'm not even sure there is a point. I'm going to have to reread what I wrote to see if I can figure it out ... OK, apparently the point was that I lead a double life. During the day, disguised as mild-mannered "Dave," I am never recognized as my notorious alter-ego.

If you were ever to encounter me in a work setting, which would generally be in an unfinished office building, you would be very unlikely to hear a conversation that went like this: "You know that guy, Dave, that is remodeling our offices? I wonder what he thinks about our foreign policy in the Middle East?"

No, that would only occur late at night, after I've changed into my superhero costume to become "The Conspiracy Theorist" (actually, I don't need to wear the superhero costume, since I never actually leave my house while in superhero mode, but there's something about the feel of a tight leotard that would probably be best left unexplored).

But enough about me. I've probably already revealed too much. I don't want to violate my contract with *Fox*, which has purchased my story to present as a new reality series entitled "Joe Commentator," in which a dim-witted construction worker masquerades as a knowledgeable political commentator and fools a group of unsuspecting readers. Stay tuned ...

Meanwhile, what I really want to talk about is Colin Powell - the Bush administration's alleged voice of sanity, the purported lone dove in a nest full of bloodthirsty hawks - who has now become, as one news report dubbed him, a "reluctant warrior." And I guess if even Colin Powell is now convinced that launching a *blitzkrieg* raid on Iraq is a swell idea, then the Bush team must have a pretty strong case for doing so. They haven't shown it to anyone, of course, but they must have it, or else a fine, upstanding man of conscience like Colin Powell wouldn't be banging the war drums so shamelessly.

While it's not quite as good as an endorsement from the UN Security Council, a thumbs-up from Powell is the next best thing. If the 'evidence' is good enough for Colin, then it's good enough for me. And, apparently, good enough for a whole lot of people who had previously been posing as tepid critics of the administration's war drive.

Most of the poseurs in the Democratic Party are now convinced. All the 'liberal' poseurs in the media are now convinced. It's clear now to just about everyone that there is no other course of action than to lay waste once again to the nation of Iraq. There's really nothing else we can do.

And the psy-war campaign marches on ... complete with way-over-the-top terrorist 'alerts' to scare and confuse the masses (as well as to justify the attempted cancellation of scheduled anti-war marches); a grotesquely over-hyped national 'tragedy' to unite the country behind our fearless leaders; and the seemingly obligatory new message from a disembodied voice that could belong to almost anyone, but is said to be that of none other than the Great Evil One himself, and which was first aired, once again, by Al Jazeera, which we are supposed to think is a constant thorn in Washington's side, but which would have been shut down long ago if it actually was.

Meanwhile, why don't we stop for a reality check? Colin - who, if I'm not mistaken, works in close proximity to Bush, both of them occasionally providing safe haven for Dick - is not now, nor has he ever been, a 'dove' (and yes, that was a crude sexual joke that you just read), he is not a voice of reason, he is not a moderating force within the Bush administration, and he is certainly not someone to look to for political guidance.

(<http://www.disinfo.com/pages/dossier/id803/pg1/> and <http://www.onlinejournal.com/Commentary/Wingo021303/wingo021303.html>)

In truth, there are no voices of moderation on the Bush team. The people now contemplating waging unprovoked chemical and nuclear warfare against the helpless civilian population of Iraq did not sit down at the beginning of Bush's term and say: "You know what? We should bring Colin Powell on board. We really need someone to rein the rest of us in or there's no telling how many people we will slaughter."

What was said was more likely along the lines of: "We really need someone who will provide the illusion of balance in this administration. Someone who the public trusts and views as a moderate, but who has a lot of experience covering up the torture, rape and massacre of civilians in Vietnam, and the crimes committed by the Iran/Contra gang, and the war crimes committed in Panama, and the war crimes committed in Iraq, and ... has anyone talked to Powell yet?"

Powell has merely been playing the role that he was assigned to play, which is to serve as something of a lightning rod for the millions of Americans out there who have had doubts about the warmongering of the Bush administration, and who are looking for someone - anyone - to provide some guidance.

Having become the Pied Piper of the Doubting Thomases, it is now time, as the onset of the attack grows near, for Powell to undergo a miraculous transformation and, by doing so, pull as many wavering Americans into the fold as possible. A healthy assist is being provided, as always, by the media.

Nice performance, Colin. You are doing a fine job. You should be very proud. Your son, by the way, is also doing a fine job over at the FCC. You should be very proud of him as well.

While we're on the subject of Iraq, it occurs to me that the last time someone named George Bush led us into a war with that nation, the story sold to the American people was that Baghdad had one of the world's largest, most powerful, and most feared military machines and therefore posed a dire threat not only to the region, but to the entire world. Once Operation Desert Slaughter began, however, that much-touted army was nowhere to be seen, and the country appeared to be almost entirely defenseless against the U.S.-led onslaught, directly contradicting the notion that Iraq was ever a military threat to anyone.

Now, twelve years later, after suffering a severe pummeling and being saddled with twelve years of sanctions and intermittent bombings that have made it all but impossible to rebuild the nation's military forces, as well as its civilian infrastructure, another George Bush is portraying a much weaker Iraq as being an international menace.

With that in mind, I have a few questions for all the flatliners out there who have become accustomed to parroting the cascade of lies emanating from Washington:

- Why, when hindsight tells us that the last Bush administration to sell us this story was lying, and rather brazenly, should we now believe the very same story being sold by the very same mouthpieces in the new Bush administration?
- Why, if Iraq is such a military powerhouse, was it unable to gain any ground in its war with Iran after years of fighting, even with an extensive amount of covert Western

support? How can Iraq be a threat to the region if it needs help just to reach a draw with its nearest rival?

- How can a country that is so poorly equipped militarily that it can't even defend its own airspace, and reportedly hasn't been able to pick off a single U.S. aircraft during twelve years of illegal over-flights and occasional bombing 'sorties,' pose any sort of a threat to its neighbors?
- Why, if waging war with neighboring Iran and 'gassing its own people' are such inexcusable crimes, did the Baghdad bunch receive generous Western support while engaging in such actions?
- And why, if waging war with neighboring Iran and 'gassing its own people' are such inexcusable crimes, was the regime allegedly responsible for such actions not removed twelve years ago? Isn't it 'double jeopardy' to bomb a country again for something that it has already been bombed for?
- Why, when Saddam Hussein was largely forgotten for a decade or so after the first 'war' that was supposed to relieve him of his command, and when Osama bin Laden has been largely forgotten after the 'war' that was supposed to be about bringing him to justice, should we now believe that the goal of this 'war' has anything to do with Saddam Hussein?
- If Saddam Hussein is in possession of 'weapons of mass destruction,' as the Washington gang has repeatedly assured us that he is, is it really a good idea to repeatedly assert that the primary goal of the invasion will be 'regime change'? If Saddam has been served notice, loud and clear, that his days are numbered, then what possible reason would he have for *not* deploying any and all 'weapons of mass destruction' that he can get his hands on?
- Country "A" has been accused of possessing weapons of mass destruction, though no tangible evidence has been produced to support those allegations. Country "A" has not threatened to use such weapons, if they do exist, nor has it threatened to attack Country "B." Country "B," on the other hand, possesses enormous stockpiles of biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons. Country "B" also has the dubious distinction of being the only nation that has wielded all three as instruments of war. Country "B" has already launched one massive assault on Country "A," which included the use of radioactive weaponry (Depleted Uranium: <http://www.disasternews.net/news/news.php?articleid=1687>,

<http://www.coastalpost.com/03/01/03.htm>,

[http://www.lifeinfo.de/inh1./texte/GLOBE\\_INTEL1.html](http://www.lifeinfo.de/inh1./texte/GLOBE_INTEL1.html), <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2003/01/13/MN233872.DTL>,

<http://www.unobserver.com/layout5.php?id=715&blz=3>, and

<http://www.voice4change.org/stories/showstory.asp?file=030210~cfwp.asp>) and

indirect biological warfare (the deliberate targeting of water treatment and sanitation facilities in order to create the breeding grounds for otherwise preventable diseases).

Country "B" is now about to begin a second assault on Country "A," and has openly threatened to, and has drawn up plans to, deploy both nuclear

(<http://globalresearch.ca/articles/STE302A.html>, <http://www.latimes.com/la-na-nukes3feb03004428,0.6347310.story>, and

<http://globalresearch.ca/articles/VAR302A.html>) and biochemical

(<http://www.counterpunch.org/hammond02072003.html> and

<http://news.independent.co.uk/world/americas/story.jsp?story=378740>) weapons in

carrying out that attack. Here then are the questions: which is the aggressor nation -- Country "A" or Country "B"? Which is the international outlaw? Which is the 'rogue

state'? Which poses the greater threat to world peace and global stability? Take your time; I know they're tough questions.

What else is new to report? ... oh yeah, there was something about one of the Space Shuttles having a re-entry problem. It was hard to find any media coverage though, so I'm not really that clear on the details.

I do know that it was a tragedy of epic proportions. The entire nation is still grieving over it. The global village attended a memorial service, during which the president's words washed away some of our pain, but the hurt still lingers. How much tragedy, after all, can one nation endure?

This tragedy was of such magnitude that I believe I am required here, based on much of what I have read lately, to pay some kind of homage to the handful of fallen heroes. But I think I'll pass.

I'll pass because I'm not entirely convinced that the deaths of the seven astronauts were any more tragic than the deaths of countless others whose lives came to an abrupt end that day. Reader "Nick" noted that, elsewhere in the world, there were two major vehicular accidents that each claimed more lives than were lost in the Columbia disaster.

And assuming that February 2nd was a statistically average day, approximately 115 lives were tragically cut short right here in America due to vehicular accidents. Twelve days after the Columbia incident, a single head-on collision on a Texas interstate highway, just below where the Columbia broke up, left seven dead. The media barely paid attention.

Elsewhere in the world, 274 Iraqi children died on February 2nd due to the intolerable conditions created by the deliberate destruction of the country's infrastructure, the imposition of exceedingly harsh 'sanctions,' and the massive environmental damage caused by the widespread use of depleted uranium and the deliberate targeting of chemical facilities on the ground.

That death toll assumes, of course, that February 2nd was an average day. Nothing unusual about it. U.S. policies and actions kill 274 Iraqi children every day. Enough children's corpses to fill all the graves of the victims of the September 11 attacks every 11 days. And it's been like that in Iraq for twelve years now.

And we're just getting started ...

Returning then to the subject of the space shuttle ... if I remember correctly, this is the second shuttle that has made a rather spectacular exit from the space program. I mention this only because I find it odd that two space shuttles have suffered catastrophic breakdowns, whereas the Apollo missions always brought our astronauts home safe and sound.

My guess is that the aerospace technology that we had in the 1960s was rather primitive compared to what we have today. Call it a hunch. And yet our mission then was far more complex and required far more advanced technology than our mission today. We have lowered our sights, after all, from putting men on the moon to merely putting men into orbit.

We may have the Cadillac of orbiting spacecraft now, but 'back in the day' we put a rickety old Model T on the fucking moon -- and got it back with our heroes alive. And we kept on doing it, and our boys kept on coming back every time. Oh sure, there was that one time with



Apollo 13 when it was allegedly touch-and-go, but, by God, we solved the problem and we got our astronauts back alive.

Nowadays, we can't even get our boys home safe after sending them up to work on some orbiting weapons systems. So I guess what I'm wondering is: how did we manage that perfect safety record with the Apollo program (aside from, of course, that fire during training exercises that disposed of some troublesome astronauts)?

It is utter madness, of course, to suggest that that safety record was due to the fact that it is easier to fake repeated successes than it is to actually achieve repeated successes. But it does seem kind of odd that we pulled it off not just once, but repeatedly. And with 1960s technology that, to be honest, basically sucked.

Some readers will recall that (younger readers may want to cover their eyes here, because the information to follow is shocking), in the 1960s, a full complement of 'home electronics' consisted of a fuzzy, 13-channel, black-and-white television set with a rotary tuning dial and no remote.

And yes, I am quite aware that it wasn't consumer electronics that allegedly sent men to the moon. The point here though is that advances in aerospace technology, or in any other type of technology, mirror advances in consumer technology. So it is safe to say that, technologically speaking, the 1960s fell somewhere within the Dark Ages.

But we didn't need any of the fancy technology that we have today to land Buzz and the boys on the moon. No sir. Nor to get them back. They reentered in a space capsule that looked like it was left over from the set of a Roger Corman flick, but which nonetheless safely parachuted into the ocean. Every time. And we didn't need to cover those capsules with all those high-falutin tiles either.

Back in the 'sixties, we just used good-old Yankee ingenuity. We MacGyvered those spaceships to the moon. All that was needed was an old Volkswagen, a body kit, some duct tape and a roll of bailing wire. That, and a few Nazi scientists recruited through Project Paperclip.

Well, dear readers, once again I have run out of space before getting to the material that was promised in the previous newsletter. Actually, I haven't, strictly speaking, run out of space, since the length restrictions on these missives are entirely self-imposed. But you get the point.

Before signing off though, I have some noteworthy links to pass along. This first one, to an organizational chart on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's website, reveals that the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research has merged the functions of counter-terrorism and pediatric drug development, creating the Office of Counter-Terrorism and Pediatric Drug Development. Does anyone other than me find that a bit disturbing?  
(<http://www.fda.gov/cder/pediatric/PediatricOrgchart.htm>)

If not, then does anyone other than me find it a bit disturbing that Henry the K's replacement to head the allegedly independent investigation into the events of September 11, 2001 has business ties to a brother-in-law of our arch-enemy, Osama bin Laden?  
(<http://www.fortune.com/fortune/print/0,15935,410237,00.html>,  
<http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/CHO212A.html>, and  
[http://truthout.org/docs\\_02/020303E.htm](http://truthout.org/docs_02/020303E.htm))



Still no takers? Then how about this: does anyone other than me find it a bit disturbing that the U.S. media - the very same allegedly 'liberal' media that flogged the Gary Condit/Chandra Levy story unmercifully - has had absolutely nothing to say about the fact that the corpse of a woman with whom former Republican Congressman Joe Scarborough (FL) was having an affair turned up in the congressman's office with a messy head wound?

(<http://www.liberalstlant.com/journalists.htm>)

Am I still alone here? Tough crowd, obviously. Well then, does anyone find it disturbing, or perhaps revealing, that Donald Rumsfeld, during an interview with a journalist for *Parade Magazine*, spoke of a "missile" in connection with the attack on the Pentagon?

([http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Nov2001/t11182001\\_t1012pm.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Nov2001/t11182001_t1012pm.html))

Let's see what else I have here ... does anyone find it disturbing, though not necessarily shocking, that the U.S. now fairly openly embraces torture as an 'interrogation' tool?

(<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/12/26/1040511135568.html>,

<http://www.hrw.org/press/2002/12/us1227.htm>,

<http://www.observer.co.uk/international/story/0,6903,866235,00.html>,

<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2002/dec2002/tort-d30.shtml>, and

<http://www.cooperativeresearch.org/post911fp/renditiontorture.htm>)

That applies, one presumes, only to 'terrorist' suspects. And, I suppose, to U.S. citizens who have been declared to be 'combatants.'

([http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/ap/20030108/ap\\_on\\_go\\_ot/afghan\\_american\\_prisoners\\_6](http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/ap/20030108/ap_on_go_ot/afghan_american_prisoners_6))

And occasionally, perhaps, to guys that try to take photographs of the hotel that Dick Cheney is staying in. (<http://www.2600.com/news/view/article/1441>)

I can't help wondering exactly what sort of information it is that U.S. interrogators need to force from 'terrorist' suspects. Would the interrogation go something like this?

Interrogator: "Where is Osama bin Laden?"

al Qaeda suspect: "I can't really tell you for sure, but I heard he has a little place in Washington a few doors down from Don Rumsfeld."

In other news, the *Los Angeles Times* reported, just a couple of days before Christmas 2002, that a U.S. soldier had been killed in Afghanistan. He was, according to the report, "the 23rd U.S. service member to be killed since the fighting in Afghanistan began in autumn 2001. The previous fatality was on May 19."

Some readers may find these statistics a little hard to believe. Only 23 killed on our side in more than 14 months of fighting? No fatalities at all between May and December? Seven months of waging war without a single fatality? How could that be? How could it be that taking in a show at a club is significantly more hazardous to your health than fighting in a war?

Don't people die in a war anymore? Don't any of our 'enemies' fight back?

The reality is that our servicemen are not supermen (though the Pentagon is busily working at making them just that: <http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2003/01/05/1041566309313.html> and <http://www.counterpunch.org/floyd01132003.html>). The other side does fight back, and idealistic young Americans - their heads filled with delusions of John Wayne-style heroism - do have their dreams brought to a sudden, violent end.

A report by *Jihad Unspun* provides somewhat different casualty figures than those given by the *Times*: <http://www.jihadunspun.net/articles/08212002-Casualty.Report/casualty02.html>. Based on reports that managed to make it into various avenues of the media, allied casualties are shown to run to nearly 1,000. The real figure is likely much higher even than that.

U.S. casualties in *Iraq Attack II* will be significantly higher. Too high, most likely, for them to be completely concealed from the American people. Speaking of Iraq, it was the U.S. and its Western allies, in case anyone still doesn't know this, who supplied Iraq with its 'weapons of mass destruction' back in the days when it had a nasty habit of actually using them.

([http://www.truthout.org/docs\\_02/12.21A.us.firms.iraq.htm](http://www.truthout.org/docs_02/12.21A.us.firms.iraq.htm),  
<http://www.news.scotsman.com/international.cfm?id=1422882002>, and  
[http://www.ccmep.org/2002\\_articles/Iraq/121802\\_leaked\\_report\\_says\\_german\\_and\\_us.htm](http://www.ccmep.org/2002_articles/Iraq/121802_leaked_report_says_german_and_us.htm))

Still on the subject of Iraq, here is a piece by Joe Bob Briggs that didn't get nearly the circulation that it deserved when it was first published back in November of 2002 (<http://www.upi.com/view.cfm?StoryID=20021111-014603-8803r>). I see, by the way, where Saddam Hussein would like to publicly debate George Bush. Sounds like 'Must See TV' to me. Much better would be a televised debate between Bush and the always eloquent Fidel Castro. (<http://www.swans.com/library/art9/mws041.html>)

And yet still on the subject of Iraq, *ABC News* revealed that the U.S. plans to unleash an enormous new bomb known as a MOAB, which is said to be even larger and more powerful than the 'Daisy Cutters' that we recently dropped on Afghanistan. The blast from a MOAB is said to be "similar to a small nuclear weapon."

(<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/wnt/World/newbomb030225.html>)

The final words of the *ABC* posting are quite telling. They read as follows: "But one important aspect of using this type of weapon, sources say, will be psychological impact on enemy troops. It is intended to terrorize Iraqi troops, drastically reducing their desire to continue the fight."

That, you see, is what terrorists do: they use brutally violent means to foment terror which is intended to coerce compliance. They use weapons that are "intended to terrorize." They try to break the will of the 'enemy.' That is what they're doing here in America. That is what they did in Afghanistan. And that is what they will do in Iraq. That is what terrorists do.

Elsewhere in the news, Pennsylvania has decided that it is perfectly acceptable for police to shoot pre-teen children in the back (<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2003/feb2003/penn-f25.shtml>), while New York wants to vastly increase the spying powers of the NYPD. (<http://www.villagevoice.com/issues/0251/lee.php>)

At least twenty cities ([http://www.truthout.org/docs\\_02/12.21D.20.cities.htm](http://www.truthout.org/docs_02/12.21D.20.cities.htm)), oops, make that twenty-two cities ([http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/ap/20030110/ap\\_on\\_re\\_us/rights\\_resolutions\\_1](http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/ap/20030110/ap_on_re_us/rights_resolutions_1)), have now rejected the Patriot Act and Homeland Security legislation, even while Team Bush moves to further strengthen Big Brother's hand by monitoring ISPs. (<http://www.siliconvalley.com/mld/siliconvalley/4779109.htm> and <http://www.smirkingchimp.com/article.php?sid=9507>)

The *WSWS* reported that an investigation into warnings that preceded the bombing in Bali was a whitewash (<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2003/jan2003/igis-j07.shtml>). Probably so, but at

least there was a fake investigation -- which is more than can be said for the September 11 attacks. Or the anthrax attacks.

In the unlikely event that such investigations ever do get underway, here are some pieces of evidence that investigators might consider (both from decidedly right-wing sources): *American Free Press* claims that a tape from the WTC towers containing firefighters' voices has been suppressed precisely because the tape casts serious doubts on the notion that the towers' collapses were due solely to the aircraft crashes and fires ([http://www.americanfreepress.net/08\\_09\\_02/New\\_York\\_Firefighters\\_/new\\_york\\_firefighters\\_.html](http://www.americanfreepress.net/08_09_02/New_York_Firefighters_/new_york_firefighters_.html)); and Judicial Watch charges that the White House staff was put on *Cipro* on September 11 -- before any hint of the coming anthrax attacks (<http://www.judicialwatch.org/2953.shtml>). Hmmm ...

One reader asked the other day whether there was any new news on the Wellstone crash investigation. Funny you should ask. On February 21, crash investigators released some preliminary investigative reports. According to the *L.A. Times*, they reveal that the lead pilot almost canceled the flight due to poor weather, but later changed his mind. (<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-wellstone22feb22,1,940810.story>)

While the emphasis appears to be on smearing the pilot and co-pilot, likely as a prelude to the issuance of a report claiming pilot error, investigators are also looking at "the procedures used to de-ice the plane, and the FAA's oversight of aviation charter companies." There was no mention of whether investigators had looked at, or ruled out, sabotage as a cause of the crash.

Wrapping things up, let's take a quick look at: the UK's Celldar Project, which aims to use mobile phones to track anyone, anywhere, anytime (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/mobile/article/0,2763,811034,00.html/>); Army Secretary Thomas White and Enron (<http://www.counterpunch.org/leopold01032003.html>); Zionist collaboration with the Nazis during World War II (<http://www.counterpunch.org/brenner1223.html>); the fabrication of evidence against protesters in Genoa (<http://www.fair.org/activism/genoa-update.html>); some mysterious webs in Texas (<http://www.galvnews.com/report.lasso?wcd=6722>); and the Bush Team's 'no-fly' list (<http://www.interventionmag.com/cms/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=278>).

Finally, here is a link to a wonderfully insightful and satirical look at 'conspiracy theories' and September 11 ([http://adelaide.indymedia.org/front.php3?article\\_id=4246&group=webcast](http://adelaide.indymedia.org/front.php3?article_id=4246&group=webcast)), and another to a site featuring a set of 'Friendly Dictator' (defined as: thugs supported and financed by the U.S.) trading cards that you can collect and trade with friends and family. ([http://home.iprimus.com.au/korob/fdtcards/Cards\\_Index.html](http://home.iprimus.com.au/korob/fdtcards/Cards_Index.html))

And that, as they say in Hollywood, is a wrap. See you next, uhmm, week ...

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## **NEWSLETTER #38**

*June 4, 2003*

### *Of Myths and Monsters*

Those who impugn campaigns of vilification based on deception, soon find themselves caught in the same web, discredited themselves. It has always been so. Those who rush to the defense of the unfairly accused, join the ranks of the unfairly accused. Machiavells, and those with their eye of the main chance, including left-wing radicals who eschew any cause that has even the faintest taint of being associated with anyone who has been discredited, no matter how unfairly, clam up, or worse, add their voices to the chorus of accusers, to put as much distance between themselves and the unfairly accused as they can.

(<http://www3.sympatico.ca/sr.gowans/lie.html>)

So said Stephen Gowans in a posting from October 2002 entitled "Turning a lie into a received truth." In *Newsletter #19*, also from October 2002, I took what I assumed would be a very unpopular stance by championing someone who has definitely been the target of a campaign of vilification -- a campaign that has endured for decades. For those who missed that missive the first time around, here it is again.

(<http://davesweb.cncast.com/nwsltr19.html>)

[On March 5, 1953, Joseph Stalin died under conditions that "to this day are shrouded in mystery." Stalin, as I noted, had "held the rampant imperialism of the West largely in check for eight years following World War II." In August 1953, just five months after his death, the U.S. directed a bloody coup in Iran.]

And so began an endless series of bloody coups, rigged elections, and assassinations -- all aimed at bringing all of the world under the control of the West, even while Western leaders justified their actions with claims that it was the Soviet Union that had its sights set on world domination. Strangely though, *Time* had earlier admitted, in yet another Man of the Year offering (1942), that Stalin was "concentrat[ing] on building socialism in one state," and wanted "no new territories except at points needed to make Russia impregnable against invasion."

(<http://www.time.com/time/special/moy/1942.html>)

It is also interesting to note that, even in the midst of demonizing Stalin in an earlier Man of the Year offering (1939), *Time* begrudgingly admitted that after twelve years of his rule, "There were accounts of big dams built, large factories going up, widespread industrialization, big collective-farming projects. Five-Year plans were announced. Free schools and hospitals were erected everywhere. Illiteracy was on the way to being wiped out. There was no persecution of minorities as such. A universal eight-hour and then a seven-hour day prevailed. There were free hospitalization, free workers' summer colonies, etc."

(<http://www.time.com/time/special/moy/1939.html>)

That same MOY article also made a passing reference to "Soviet Russia's meticulously fostered reputation of a peace-loving, treaty-abiding nation," and noted that "Soviet Russia had definitely gained some measure of respect for its apparent righteousness in foreign affairs."

It had supported against reactionary attacks popular governments in Hungary, Austria, China, Spain."

... It should go without saying that the excerpts from *Time's* two profiles of Stalin sound nothing like the dreaded "Stalinism" that we all love to hate. Instead, we find a peace-loving, treaty-abiding nation that consistently sides with the people to oppose fascist regimes, that offers free, quality education and healthcare for all, that has guaranteed worker protections, and that is known for racial tolerance.

Compare that with what we have now: a war mongering, outlaw nation that consistently backs brutal, fascistic regimes against the will of the people, that barely bothers to fund public education and that offers medical care only to those who can afford the exorbitant fees charged for such services, that has declared war on labor by invoking the Taft-Hartley Act under entirely contrived circumstances, and that could, shall we say, use a little work in the area of racial tolerance.

Now bear with me here, because I'm just thinking out loud, but it seems to me that 'Stalinism,' even as presented through the biased eyes of *Time*, would be a vast improvement over this fabulously 'free' and 'democratic' system that we now have. And it seems kind of funny to me, quite frankly, that we have all been taught to so thoroughly and universally despise the one man on the world stage who could honestly take credit for doing what the U.S. likes to pompously boast of: defeating the fascist powers of Europe.

Any reasonably honest reading of history reveals that it was the Red Army that crushed the Nazi war machine, with only nominal 'help' from the West coming late in the fourth quarter. And it was Joseph Stalin who commanded that Red Army. According to *Time*, Stalin put in sixteen-hour days personally directing the war effort, while living in a modest three-room apartment.

This may not be a 'politically correct' statement, but the world owes an incalculable debt of gratitude to Joseph Stalin for slaying the fascist beast -- or at least sending it underground until, in case you haven't noticed yet, it recently resurfaced.

Those are the types of comments that I usually anticipate will not sit well with most readers. The name "Stalin," after all, is used interchangeably with the name "Hitler," just as the term "Stalinism" is frequently substituted for "Nazism" or "Fascism." In modern history, the two World War II leaders stand head-and-shoulders above the crowd as the most evil, the most hated, the most loathsome, the most indefensible of historical figures.

On an almost daily basis, I read otherwise commendable newspaper articles and Internet postings that are marred by the author's conditioned response of always equating Stalin with Hitler. In fact, Stalin seems to be well on his way to surpassing Hitler and becoming the single most despised figure of the twentieth century.

On November 23, 2002, the *Los Angeles Times* ran an article (buried in the entertainment section) entitled "What's Behind This Ugly Hitler-Fest?" In the piece, the authors denounce what they refer to as "a crop of disturbing new movies that attempt to exploit the media-genic Fuhrer."

Aim is taken at the movie *Max*, which is characterized as presenting Hitler through the prism of the "rejected artist syndrome," and at a recent CBS miniseries that portrays Hitler as

suffering from "abused child syndrome." The authors conclude that "announcements from the movie industry show [that] those who shape popular culture are at the crossroads [writer David] Irving reached in the 1970s."

That crossroads was reached by Irving when he realized "that the time had come to make a case for Hitler. Irving argued that in the court of history, Hitler had had too many prosecutors and no serious defenders." The authors of the *Times* piece believe that Hollywood is now rising up to rectify that situation, ever so subtly beginning to reshape the consensus view of Adolf Hitler.

Joseph Stalin is enjoying no such renaissance. Nowhere in America can a sympathetic portrayal of the Soviet leader be found. And again I must say that I find that a little odd, considering that Stalin was, as commander of the Red Army, the man who saved the world from an overt fascist takeover in the 1940s.

Much has been written in the last couple of years, by myself and others, of the parallels between the Hitler regime and the Bush regime. George Bush's Supreme Court appointment has been compared to Adolph Hitler's quasi-legal ascent to power; the September 11 attacks have been equated with the Reichstag fire; the repressive PATRIOT ACT has drawn comparisons to Nazi Germany's 'enabling' laws; the 'preemptive' strike on Iraq has been said to mirror the invasion of Poland; and the looting of Baghdad's banks and national and historical treasures seems to owe much to the model provided by the Nazis.

But one parallel that I haven't seen mentioned – and I could be wrong here, since I'm still getting caught up on things – is the one between the fall of Baghdad in April 2003 and the fall of, say, Paris in June 1940. For those who have forgotten, Paris fell without a fight after being declared an "open city." German troops rolled right in unopposed by any organized forces. Sound familiar?

In fact, pretty much all of Western Europe, and parts of Eastern Europe, fell without a fight. Resistance groups like Tito's 'Partisans' in Yugoslavia and the French Resistance fought valiantly against the occupation forces, to be sure, but the official military structures of the European nations did almost nothing to oppose the imposition of the Nazi puppet governments.

And why was that? Because much of World War II was fought, quite covertly, long before any front lines were formed or any shots were fired. Europe had been sold out -- by the Lavals, by the Quislings, by others far too numerous to mention -- and was just waiting to be rolled over. The change in government had essentially already been made; the people just hadn't been informed yet (and when they were, many of them chose to take up arms with grassroots resistance movements).

That is how fascists tend to fight wars. They like to do their dirty work behind the scenes. They like to ensure that when it comes time to actually fight an overt war on the public stage, the deck has been so thoroughly stacked, through subterfuge, that the 'enemy,' for all intents and purposes, no longer actually exists.

And so it was that the Nazi war machine rolled easily through most of Europe, virtually unopposed in its initial occupations, yet continuously hampered by 'pockets of resistance' throughout its occupied empire (not unlike the scenario that has played out in both

Afghanistan and Iraq). Conventional wisdom held that the Germans would roll just as easily through the Soviet Union.

And why not? Western intelligence operatives had made their initial penetrations into the fledgling Soviet Union in 1917, just after the revolution. They had been at work for a quarter-century before the first Nazi tanks rolled into Soviet territory. Many of these Soviet 'assets,' particularly among the so-called 'White Russian' community, would later 'defect' to the West bearing tales of terror and repression. The massive intelligence apparatus run by Reinhold Gehlen, who coordinated Nazi Germany's Eastern operations, had been hard at work as well, paving the way for the massive June 22, 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union.

But something very strange and unexpected happened: the Red Army did not follow the lead of Europe's armies and roll over for the Nazis. They fought back long and hard, at a cost of millions of lives, and ultimately prevailed. Why did that happen? Why did the Soviet Union defy expectations by not just resisting, but defeating the Nazi aggressors?

We'll get to that, but first let's take a look at a response that I got to my initial pro-Stalin diatribe. This is the type of response that I anticipated receiving, and was surprised that it took over a week for this one, lonely, solitary response to arrive:

[This] is indeed one of those e-mails that you predicted would come to you in opposition to your comments on Stalin. Funny thing happened after the collapse of the Soviet Union: the archives opened up. Josef Vissarionovich didn't do such a fantastic job after all, (although this was known before as well) there was indeed massive repression (much more than our own current prison complex), strict censorship, many executions, shortages of food and several famines took place, 1932-33 was the big one. A lot of people suffered and millions of people died early and nasty deaths. Stalin's actual command during WWII was not as wonderful as it might've been. He missed a number of warnings of the coming German invasion and he weakened the Red Army by purging its lead officers, among other things. Racial problems and ethnic tensions remained although diminished and driven underground.

Now I have nothing against this particular respondent. He has written before and he is, as near as I can tell, a good egg. But I believe that he is mistaken about a number of things. What he has essentially done here is to catalogue the "received truths" about Joseph Stalin, which is what I was hoping someone would do, so I am thankful that someone did, thereby saving me the trouble of having to write it up myself so that I could then provide a rebuttal.

Let's begin with the notion that "Stalin's actual command during WWII was not as wonderful as it might've been. He missed a number of warnings of the coming German invasion and he weakened the Red Army by purging its lead officers, among other things."

Conventional wisdom and Western historians say that Stalin's lack of military leadership skills did indeed weaken the Red Army and undermine the country's military preparedness, but a rational reading of history indicates otherwise.

If Stalin had in fact purged the Red Army of its best officers, if he had "betrayed the revolution" by purging all the party loyalists, then the conquest of the USSR would have proven to be the easy victory that it was scheduled to be. Instead, it was precisely because the Soviet Union did what the European nations failed to do - purged their army of fascist 'fifth columnists' prepared to sell out the Russian people - that the Red Army triumphed rather than sitting the war out.



Without the purges, the Red Army would have fallen apart, as previous foes of the Nazi war machine had done, unable to withstand the Nazi blitzkrieg. Were the purges brutal? Probably so. Were there excesses? Undoubtedly. But would the outcome of World War II, and the last sixty years of human history, have been much different without them? Undeniably.

As Party official Georgi Malenkov noted: "In the light of the war and its results, we perceive in all its magnitude the importance of that implacable struggle which over a period of many years our Party waged against every brand of enemy of Marxism-Leninism ... the Party in good time destroyed all possibility of the appearance of a 'fifth column' in the U.S.S.R., and prepared the country politically for active defence. It will be easily understood that if this had not been done in time, we should, during the war, have found ourselves under fire from the front and the rear, and might have lost the war."

So the purges achieved the desired result, but were they necessary, or was there another option? I don't have an answer for that, but I do know this: Western intelligence agencies are remarkably skilled, now as then, at structuring the game so that it is a no-win situation for the opponent.

Imagine that you are Jacobo Arbenz in the 1950s, or Fidel Castro in the 1960s, or Joseph Stalin in the 1920s and 1930s, or, skipping ahead, Hugo Chavez in the present day. You're trying to get a fledgling administration off the ground and you've got a big problem: the institutions of your country are littered with assets controlled by Western intelligence agencies.

The CIA, for instance, has moved into town and set up shop under various assumed names to operate an 'opposition' press, which daily agitates against the sitting government with heavy doses of manufactured 'black' propaganda. If you take any action against these operations, you will be vilified via the entire Western media establishment for brutally censoring the opposition press and crushing free speech. If you do nothing, the problem will continue to fester and grow. What do you do?

The political and military infrastructure of your country is seeded with Quislings, installed by the Western puppet regime that previously ruled your land, but if you take any action against these operatives you will be vilified via the entire Western media establishment for brutally repressing the political opposition -- thus 'proving' to all the world that you are indeed the monstrous tyrant that Washington claims you to be. If you do nothing, you leave yourself and your administration vulnerable to coups, assassination plots, election rigging, propaganda campaigns, and all manner of other covert shenanigans. What do you do?

Washington has left you only two choices: do nothing and allow the *covert* machinations to run their course, or take action and provide Uncle Sam with a manufactured justification for waging *overt* warfare against you. Those are your options. Which do you choose?

Fidel Castro, faced with a group of phony journalists who were openly collaborating with CIA assets to undermine the Cuban government, recently chose the latter option, arresting and imprisoning some six dozen of them. He has been roundly vilified in all avenues of the Western media for doing so, including by brazenly phony leftists like our old friend Marc Cooper.

Here is how Cooper described the situation in a recent *LA Weekly* offering (<http://www.laweekly.com/ink/03/22/dissonance-cooper.php>):



A month ago, as the war in Iraq was breaking out, Cuban police arrested nearly 80 dissidents on charges of receiving money from and collaborating with U.S. diplomats to undermine Cuba's government. The Bush administration's top diplomat in Cuba, James Cason, has indeed been quite assertive. Publicly challenging Castro, he made a point of visiting the homes of many of these dissidents and had also brought many of them to his own residence ... Within a few weeks of their arrest, all six dozen had been given prison sentences of six to 28 years ... Among those condemned are self-styled independent journalists and librarians. I know some of these people, and some are rather pathetic. Others are quite courageous. Hector Palacios, who got a 25-year term, was a leader of the Varela Project -- a completely public campaign calling for free elections that was signed on to by thousands of Cubans ... Spin this any way you please, but in the end these people are being jailed not for anything they have done -- but rather for things they have said. Or read.

No, Marc, I think it was actually for conspiring with foreign agents to further their efforts to topple the Cuban government, which I believe would be classified as a treasonous offense, and which I am pretty sure would result in incarceration, if not execution, in just about any nation on this planet.

What Cooper forgets to mention, of course, although he is well aware of it, is that the U.S. doesn't actually have any "diplomats" in Cuba. U.S. embassies in 'unfriendly' nations are not staffed with diplomats. They are staffed with intelligence operatives. The embassies serve as the CIA's station in the host country, and the head of the 'diplomatic mission,' whatever his title may be, is most likely the CIA station chief for that country.

In fact, U.S. embassies in friendly countries aren't really staffed with diplomats either. The reality is that one of the primary functions of the U.S. State Department is to provide diplomatic cover for intelligence operations. The State Department and the CIA are, in essence, opposite sides of the same coin. Never was that more clearly illustrated than during the eight years of the Eisenhower administration when the brothers Dulles ran and closely coordinated both entities, John Foster at State and little brother Allen at the CIA.

The position of Secretary of State is, by the way, a military/intelligence post, not a diplomatic one -- in case you have ever wondered why former generals like Al Haig and Colin Powell are appointed as the nation's chief 'diplomat.' Or why Secretaries of State like John Foster Dulles, Henry Kissinger and James Baker have wielded such extraordinary power.

Sorry to have to break the news to those who are still clinging to the belief that Colin Powell is a voice of reason in the Bush cabal, but you aren't going to find too many heroes riding to the rescue bearing the title of Secretary of State. And by the way, Powell isn't just a member of the Bush administration; he's a member of the Bush *family*. I guess that's why the Bush team trusts the Powells to run both the State Department and the FCC.

(<http://www.ancestry.netscape.com/landing/strange/bush3/answer3.htm>)

We seem to have, as usual, veered somewhat off course here. So let's get back to Cuba, and the fact that a group of "self-styled" journalists were, apparently rather openly, working with an "assertive" ... uhhh ... American "diplomat" to "undermine Cuba's government."

That is exactly the kind of situation that you would find yourself in, repeatedly, if you were our hypothetical world leader. So what would you do? Ignore the brazen acts of sedition? Not a wise choice. Take action? Only if you want to move yourself up a few notches on the preemptive strike list.

I noticed something interesting about Cooper's rant, by the way - other than the not-too-surprising revelation that he knows some of the Cuban operatives - which is that he included a very nice example of the sort of logical inconsistencies that you will find routinely sprinkled throughout rants of this type, and that are always accepted without comment by the media at large.

Marc Cooper would like you to believe that Fidel Castro is a brutally repressive, iron-fisted dictator who tolerates no dissent and no questioning of his authority. That is what virtually all commentators, whether from the 'left' or the 'right,' would like you to believe. They will tell you, for as long as you can stand to listen, how the Cuban people are terrorized into silence, afraid to speak of the horrors visited upon them, afraid that speaking out, in any manner, will only worsen their lot in life. That is what Marc Cooper and his media brethren want you to believe.

But here is the part that doesn't make sense: Cooper has written that one of those arrested and convicted was a leader of a "completely public campaign calling for free elections that was signed on to by thousands of Cubans." You don't say? Thousands of Cubans, living in a brutal police state, where a single unguarded comment can bring an unwelcome knock on the door late at night, *publicly* signed their names to a campaign challenging the legitimacy of the Cuban government? And they weren't rounded up and executed? They aren't rotting away in a concentration camp? How could that be?

Cooper doesn't bother to explain, nor do any of the other Cuba bashers in the Western media who make such claims. 'Journalists' will frequently claim to have gone to Cuba and to have had unguarded conversations with the Cuban people, in which said people candidly revealed their true thoughts about the reign of Fidel Castro. That always makes for good copy, but the truth of the matter is that in a real totalitarian state, people learn rather quickly not to talk to someone claiming to be a journalist, not to talk candidly to *anyone* asking too many questions, for one can never be sure that anyone is really who he claims to be.

We know then from the inherent contradictions that many of the claims made about Fidel Castro's Cuba are not true. We also know that Castro has for decades now been blamed for economic conditions that are almost entirely of our own making. We know that he has been targeted for assassination on countless occasions. We know that the U.S. has, for decades, cultivated a rabidly fascistic Cuban exile community that is regarded by many as the world's number one terrorist organization. We know that Cuba's crops and livestock have been targeted with biological and chemical agents, in efforts to starve the people and foment a revolt. We know that an invasion of the island using a proxy army was planned and carried out, albeit ineptly. We know that Castro's diversion of funds from social programs to the military has been a necessary, though quite unfortunate, response to direct and repeated U.S. provocations. We know that Cuban industry has been repeatedly sabotaged for forty years now. And we know that, despite all the obstacles placed in the way, Castro has raised the standard of living for the vast majority of Cubans, who enjoy longer life expectancies, much higher literacy rates, and vastly improved healthcare and education services.

It is not Castro's Cuba though that is the focus of this rant; it is Stalin's Soviet Union, which squared off against the covert tactics of the West long before Castro did. So let us now return to my e-mail correspondent and the majority view of Stalin. I have already addressed the notion that his dubious military command weakened the Red Army. Now let's take a look at some of the other "received truths" about Stalin.

1) "Funny thing happened after the collapse of the Soviet Union: the archives opened up."

I suppose they did. But another funny thing happened as well: when those archives opened up, a whole bunch of fraudulent, falsified documents popped out of them. That was probably due to the fact that control of those archives, after Stalin's death, passed to those who had assassinated the Soviet leader and had a vested interest in vilifying him.

I indicated in my previous Stalin rant that the circumstances under which he died are "shrouded in mystery." A new book has shed some light on that mystery, according to a recent offering from the *New York Times* (Michael Wines "New Study Supports Idea Stalin Was Poisoned," March 5, 2003):

Fifty years after Stalin died, felled by a brain hemorrhage at his dacha, an exhaustive study of long-secret Soviet records lends new weight to an old theory that he was actually poisoned, perhaps to avert a looming war with the United States ... Relying on a previously secret account by doctors of Stalin's final days, its authors suggest that he may have been poisoned with warfarin ... during a final dinner with four members of his Politburo ... Stalin suffered extensive stomach hemorrhaging during his death throes ... significant references to stomach bleeding were excised from the 20-page official medical record, which was not issued until June 1953, more than three months after his death on March 5 that year.

This book appears to be largely disinformational, intended to downplay the notion that Stalin was poisoned even while acknowledging that the available evidence indicates that he was. The authors -Vladimir Naumov and Jonathan Brent - claim "that a cerebral hemorrhage is still the most straightforward explanation for Stalin's death," while "poisoning remains for now a matter of speculation." This despite the fact that the authors admit that, "at the least -- Stalin's Politburo colleagues denied him medical help in the first few hours of his illness, when it might have been effective." The authors also acknowledge that the official report on Stalin's death was deliberately altered to create the impression that medical help was sought immediately, when in fact it was deliberately withheld.

As a second line of defense, the book's authors attempt to place blame for the assassination, if in fact it was an assassination, on Lavrenti P. Beria, chief of the Soviet secret police. Beria was one of the four senior Politburo members present at Stalin's last dinner. The others were "Georgi M. Malenkov, Stalin's immediate successor; Nikita S. Khrushchev, who eventually rose to the top spot; and Nikolai Bulganin."

The choice of Beria as the prime suspect is a convenient one, to say the least; Beria was himself executed just months after Stalin's untimely demise. So even if Stalin was assassinated, you see, justice was served, so there's really nothing to be concerned about. And besides, as the authors throw in as their third line of defense, it was actually a good thing that he was assassinated, if he was, since it spared the world the devastation of the imminent war that Stalin was preparing to launch against the U.S.

Nice story ... but I'm not buying it. And neither, for that matter, are the majority of the Russian people. Despite the massive vilification campaign, a recent "poll of 1,600 adults by the All-Russian Public Opinion Center, released today on the eve of the 50th anniversary of his death, shows that more than half of all respondents believe Stalin's role in Russian history was positive, while only a third disagreed."

It stands to reason that that is because a lot of Russian people are old enough to know that their own memories, or their parents' or grandparents' memories, don't jibe with the official reality.

As for suspects, Nikita Khrushchev seems a far more likely one than Beria. Khrushchev certainly gained much more from the assassination than did Beria. And the authors acknowledge that "Khrushchev's own account of Stalin's death, in his memoirs, [is] an almost cartoonish distortion of the truth." Nevertheless, the man who gained the most, and who brazenly lied about the assassination, is dismissed as a suspect. Go figure.

The authors, by the way, describe Beria as "for 15 years [Stalin's] despised minister of internal security." That is another one of those logical inconsistencies that I was talking about earlier. As is perfectly obvious to anyone, the most important figure in any thuggish police state, other than the dictator himself, is arguably the chief of internal security. He's the guy in charge of dealing with any dissenters in the crowd. He's the guy entrusted to maintain internal stability. So why in the world would a merciless tyrant like Joseph Stalin, purger extraordinaire that he was, allow a guy that he despised and distrusted to hold such a position for 15 years? And why did that guy wind up dead just months after Stalin died?

Another questionable theory that the authors advance is the one that says that if Stalin was assassinated, by the guy who was killed shortly afterwards, then it was done for the noble cause of averting a looming war with the United States. But what Stalin was actually preparing to do, as the authors are well aware, was to launch a defensive war, so to speak, against the covert war that he believed was being waged against his regime.

Stalin had become convinced, as the book acknowledges, that his administration had been infiltrated by actors who were plotting against him. He had reportedly determined that it was time to once again conduct a purge, and had ordered prison facilities built.

The new book apparently makes repeated references to "the Doctor's Plot, a supposed collusion in the late 1940's by Kremlin doctors to kill top Communist leaders." The authors dismiss the plot as "a fabrication by Kremlin officials, acting largely on Stalin's orders."

The book contends that "Stalin disclosed the plot to a stunned Soviet populace in January 1953." Here's what happened next:

On March 1, 1953, two weeks after [four new prison] camps were ordered built and two weeks before the accused doctors were to go on trial, Stalin collapsed at Blizhnaya, a north Moscow dacha, after the all-night dinner with his four Politburo comrades ...

Less than a month later, the doctors previously accused of trying to kill him were abruptly exonerated and the case against them was deemed an invention of the secret police ... By year's end, Beria faced a firing squad, and Khrushchev had tempered Soviet hostility toward the United States.

So if I have this right, this is basically what happened: Stalin was convinced that there were elements within his administration, likely working in collusion with Western interests, who were plotting against him, and just days before evidence of that plot was to be aired at trial, Stalin just happened to die. Immediately thereafter, all charges were quickly dropped against all the accused conspirators. The brave soul who felled the beast, if he was in fact assassinated, was rewarded by being sent before a firing squad. One of the men who had

denied medical treatment to the fallen leader, and then lied repeatedly about it, and then arranged for Beria's execution, rose up to assume Stalin's throne. This same man quickly "tempered Soviet hostility," which really means that he began working with the very same Western interests that Stalin had so feared. From the time of Stalin's death, the new breed of Soviet leaders began covertly converting the Soviet Union to a capitalist system, while they and their Washington counterparts continued for forty more years to pretend as though the two nations were still ideological rivals. However, no one should conclude from any of that there ever was any actual plot to do away with Stalin.

In the minutes of a meeting of top Party officials from December 1952, just three months before his death, Stalin is quoted as saying: "Here, look at you -- blind men, kittens. You don't see the enemy. What will you do without me?" The problem though wasn't that they couldn't see the enemy. And they knew exactly what they would do once Stalin was no longer around.

2) "Racial problems and ethnic tensions remained although diminished and driven underground."

Probably so. As far as I know, no one has the power to make decades, even centuries, of racial and ethnic tensions simply disappear overnight. If such tensions had merely been "diminished and driven underground," that certainly showed that Soviet society was moving in the right direction, and that vast improvements had been made.

It is not a perfect world that we live in and no one yet has offered us any perfect models to choose from. Nearly a century-and-a-half have passed in this country since the Civil War was fought, allegedly to free the slaves, but the problem of racial tensions has certainly not been 'solved,' but merely "diminished and driven underground." Stalin accomplished considerably more in much less time, and he had scores of rival ethnic groups to contend with.

3) "shortages of food and several famines took place, 1932-33 was the big one. A lot of people suffered and millions of people died early and nasty deaths."

Indeed they did, and conventional wisdom tells us that Joseph Stalin was to blame. During his reign, three consecutive "Five Year Plans" were launched with the intention of rapidly industrializing the nation. The plans were wildly successful in achieving the goal of converting a largely agricultural society into a self-sufficient, industrialized nation.

These plans were a response to World War I, the first massive invasion of Russian territory. Stalin recognized that another invasion was coming and that the only way to defend the Soviet Union was to rapidly create an infrastructure that could support a modern, mechanized army.

He also recognized that the Soviet Union needed to become self-sufficient, and by the dawn of World War II that goal had been attained: the Soviet Union did not need any imports or exports to survive. But just as with Castro in Cuba, Stalin didn't set out to isolate the Soviet Union from the Western world; he reacted to the fact that the Western world had already isolated, and targeted, the Soviet Union.

In the rush to industrialize, agriculture and food production inevitably suffered. So Stalin must certainly shoulder some of the blame for the famines of the 1920s and 1930s. But Soviet leaders consistently maintained that Western operatives repeatedly sabotaged food production. And there is little reason to doubt such claims. That has, after all, been the *modus*

*operandi* of the West for quite some time, and continues to be to this day. The Iraqi people, for example, were starved for a full decade prior to the recent U.S. occupation.

Since I just provided that nice segue onto the topic of Iraq, I have to comment here on the chatter about the elusive 'Weapons of Mass Destruction.' It is pretty clear by now that such weapons don't actually exist, and that maybe, you know, Bush received some faulty intelligence or something, or maybe he even lied a little bit, but it really doesn't matter because there were other justifications for going to war, and the outcome clearly vindicated the U.S. stance.

The problem is that the WMDs *do* matter. Very much so. For you see, according to international law, there is one and only one justification for taking military action against a sovereign nation, just as, throughout the 'civilized' world, there is one and only one justification for willfully taking a human life: self defense against an imminent threat.

There is no other valid justification for waging war. And if there were no 'Weapons of Mass Destruction,' then Iraq certainly didn't pose an imminent threat to the United States. It didn't pose any sort of threat at all. And that leads to the inescapable conclusion that those who planned and carried out the invasion of Iraq are war criminals ... but here I have, as usual, digressed.

Returning to the subject at hand, I guess the question that needs to be asked here is: who was ultimately to blame for the tragic loss of human life due to starvation? Was it the leaders who, with an eye to ensuring the continued security of the sovereign Soviet state, chose to industrialize and militarize the nation, thus enabling the USSR to defeat the Axis powers? Or was it the leaders who forced the Soviet state to adopt a defensive posture, and then repeatedly sabotaged that nation's agriculture and industry? There seems to be no shortage of blame to toss around.

4) "there was indeed massive repression (much more than our own current prison complex), strict censorship."

Perhaps, but as I noted earlier, the majority of the Russian people don't remember things that way. They remember a leader who took necessary actions to insure the security of the state. What is portrayed as repression and censorship isn't necessarily so.

In an ideal world, there would be absolute freedom of the press and absolute freedom of political expression. But we live in a world where the deck is stacked, and a utopian society cannot be created in a hostile environment. So where does the answer lie?

5) "many executions"

Ahhh, yes, the executions. Millions of them, if I'm not mistaken. Except that, as near as I can tell, there is scant evidence to support that charge. Not so in Nazi Germany, where the victims' bodies were found stacked like firewood. But where are all the mass graves in the former Soviet Union?

A recent offering from the *Los Angeles Times* proves illuminating. The title of the frontpage piece, "Skeletons of History in Russian Graves" (John Daniszewski, November 18, 2002), implied that evidence of mass murders was readily available, but a careful reading of the text of the article reveals a different story.

The article concerns the activities of "a small team investigating what it says is a newly discovered Stalinist killing field outside St. Petersburg." The group, a non-governmental organization known as Memorial, claims that the Soviet state sponsored the "killing of tens of millions of Soviet citizens from the earliest days of the Bolsheviks until the death of Josef Stalin in 1953, and some even later." In St. Petersburg, according to Memorial, victims from Kresty Prison and from the local NKVD headquarters were loaded into vehicles in the dead of night, driven out into the woods, and then summarily executed.

Now you would think that if tens of millions were executed in the USSR, a city like St. Petersburg, being one of the largest and most strategic population centers, would have supplied a good number of those victims. So you would expect that the primary killing grounds for that city would yield an unfathomable number of corpses. But you would be mistaken.

According to the *Times*, Memorial has concluded, "now that more than 50 graves have been found ... [that] there can be little doubt that this was the NKVD's main graveyard in St. Petersburg during the 1937-38 period known as the Great Terror." And it only took Memorial "14 years of deduction, investigation and detective work ... to find the first remains."

It's kind of funny, but I seem to remember that a guy named George Bush ordered about 50 executions in the state of Texas during the 1997-98 period, but I don't recall anyone referring to that as the Great Terror. And everyone knows where those bodies are buried.

Anyway, Memorial "presumes" that there are actually "many layers below, but it says it is not interested in disturbing the dead by doing a complete excavation." Of course not. Why would you want to get an accurate count when you can just presume? And besides, Memorial already *knows* how many victims there were. They have devised an accurate system for estimating the death toll: they just make it up.

For the site in the forest near Toksovo, Memorial has arbitrarily arrived at a figure of 32,000. That is, I should note, only about 640 times the actual number of bodies that have been recovered. And here is how Memorial deduced that figure: "Memorial's estimate of 32,000 victims in Toksovo is based on subtraction. About 40,000 people in what was then Leningrad and its surrounding region were killed in the Great Terror, but the one known grave of the victims is believed to hold only about 8,000."

It's interesting to note that the other known grave site is "believed to hold" 8,000 corpses, just as the Toksovo site is "presumed" to hold another 32,000. In fact though, there is precious little evidence that either site holds anywhere near that many victims. There is little evidence to indicate that there are *any* substantial mass graves in the vicinity of one of the largest population centers in the FSU.

So the question remains: where are the *tens of millions* of bodies of the victims killed during the Great Terror? They shouldn't be all that difficult to locate -- what with the archives having been opened up and all.

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Anyone who thinks that the fascist beast ruling America can be slain merely by cutting off its head is woefully misinformed. Even Marc Cooper is honest enough to admit that. Near the end of one of his recent disinformation-filled rants, he wrote: "Unfortunately, you don't

change the entire body politic of America by merely changing a president."  
(<http://www.laweekly.com/ink/03/27/dissonance-cooper.php>)

No, you certainly do not. Never before in recorded history has a country been as thoroughly infested with homegrown 'fifth-columnists.' They are everywhere. Their voices are called upon to shape public opinion on every conceivable topic. One has only to pick up any daily newspaper and read through it, or turn on any cable news program, or tune into any talk radio program, to see how completely information, and public opinion, is controlled in this country.

You cannot bring about any kind of serious political change in this country without first bringing about a radical change in public opinion, and you cannot bring about a change in public opinion until you break the state's monopoly control of information -- information disseminated through the media, academia, the church, and every other institution of any significance in this country.

You cannot affect significant change in this country, in other words, without purging the elements that seek to maintain the status quo at any cost. The good news is that we already have plenty of prison cells for the guilty parties. All we have to do is let out all the non-violent offenders who are currently occupying those cells, and we'll be good to go.

But don't look to anyone else to get the job done. What figure is there on the world stage today who will stand up to the fascist beast? Don't pin your hopes on poseurs like Shroeder, Chretien, Chirac or Putin. For my money, what the world needs today, more so than ever, is a man of sufficient stature to fill the shoes of Joseph Stalin.

[For those interested in alternative views of Stalin, 'Stalinism,' and the post-Stalin period, here are three books that cover those very topics. All are available as free downloads. You probably will not, and should not, agree with everything that these authors have to say, but it will cost you nothing but time to hear them out. And you have spent your entire life hearing the other side of the story:

1. Ludo Martens *Another View of Stalin*, <http://www.plp.org/books/Stalin/book.html>
2. Anna Louise Strong *The Stalin Era*, [http://www.plp.org/books/strong\\_stalin\\_era.pdf](http://www.plp.org/books/strong_stalin_era.pdf)
3. W.B. Bland, for the Communist League (UK) *The Restoration of Capitalism in the Soviet Union*, <http://www.etext.org/Politics/MIM/wim/wyl/hoxha/bland/index.html>]



*The Center for an Informed America*

## **NEWSLETTER #39**

*June 12, 2003*

*Wild, Wild West Edition*

*[www.davesweb.cnchost.com/nwsltr39.html](http://www.davesweb.cnchost.com/nwsltr39.html)*

Due to the volume of responses that I received to the last newsletter, I had planned to devote this edition to reviewing and responding to many of your comments. But since those comments are still arriving, I decided to hold off on the follow-up until next week.

That decision left me in something of a dilemma, since I didn't have another topic waiting in the wings. There was, in other words, the distinct possibility that this newsletter would lack focus -- and we all know how much I hate it when that happens. Luckily then, I stumbled upon this reprint of a recent *New York Times* article: <http://www.iht.com/articles/98633.html>

The article concerns the legendary Wild West lawman Pat Garrett, who gunned down the legendary Wild West outlaw Billy the Kid -- except that it seems as though that story may not actually be true. According to the *Times* article, "modern science is about to touch Garrett's fame in a way that some say could expose him as a liar who covered up a murder to save his reputation."

The scenario being investigated is that Garrett killed the wrong man and then covered that fact up to save his own skin. A more likely scenario though is that Garrett actively conspired with the Kid to fake his death, after assisting him in making an escape. The *Times* piece acknowledges that one enduring story "holds that Garrett and the Kid may have been in cahoots for some reason and that Garrett had stashed a gun in the outhouse at the jail that the Kid used to kill the deputies and escape." Just weeks after that escape was when Garrett supposedly killed the Kid.

But according to sources cited in the *Times* article, and elsewhere, the Kid may have lived to the ripe old age of 90, after taking the name "Brushy" Bill Roberts. Roberts died in 1950, shortly after his photo appeared in the January 21, 1950 edition of the *San Antonio Express*:



Roberts is the gentleman standing in the center of the photo. To his right, seated, is Colonel James R. Davis, who claimed to be a former U.S. Marshal for the Cherokee Indian Nation. Davis was 109 when this photo was taken. To Roberts' left, lying in bed, is 102-year-old J. Frank Dalton. Dalton claimed to have been an even more notorious Wild West outlaw than Billy the Kid: Jesse James.

And that brings us to our topic for this outing: the strange and twisted tale of the man known as Jesse James. I actually started to write on this topic last year, but soon got distracted by some sort of Team Bush shenanigans. So let me now dust off that discarded missive and present it here for your reading pleasure.

But wait a minute, you're thinking, what does Jesse James have to do with gaining an understanding of twenty-first century U.S. politics? What does America's most famous outlaw have to do with contemporary 'conspiracy theory'? Where is the relevance? What, as my mother used to say, does Jesse James have to do with the price of tea in China?

I'm not really sure why mom used to say that, just as I am not sure why any statement by me or my siblings that began with the words "I want ..." would get the response: "That's too bad; people in Hell want ice water." Apparently during the 1960s and 1970s there was some sort of logistical problem with getting adequate supplies of ice water to Hell, but I never really understood why that meant that I couldn't have a BB gun.

But none of that really has anything to do with this story.

The question here is: what is to be gained from examining the life of Jesse James? If this was to be a standard recitation of the life of the Wild West's most notorious figure, then the answer would be: not much. But this isn't the account of Jesse's life that has passed into popular mythology; this is the account of Jesse's life that was told by his grandson.

If this account is accurate, and much of it does have a ring of truth to it, then it illustrates once again the extent to which the official history of this country is nothing but a tangled web of

lies. But how much of this story is true? That, alas, is difficult to determine. When the lies run so deep, when they have been repeated so frequently as to become a faux reality - a collective hallucination - then it is a daunting task finding anything close to the truth. But whether true or not, it is a story that is too good to not pass along.

This story was published nearly three decades ago, by Jesse James III and a writer by the name of Del Schrader, under the title *Jesse James Was One of His Names* (the title refers to the claim that James operated under some six dozen assumed identities). The book is all but impossible to find today.

Before we get to the alternative history, let's first review the facts of Jesse's life that are generally agreed upon. Jesse James was the second son born to a Baptist minister named Robert James and his wife, born Zerelda Cole Mimms. The couple's first-born son was Alexander Franklin James, better known as Frank. Frank entered this world on January 10, 1843, and Jesse followed on September 5, 1847.

Robert James died when the boys and a younger sister were still very young. In 1855, Zerelda married again, to a wealthy doctor, landowner, and slave owner named Rueben Samuels. Six years later, the South seceded from the Union, forming the Confederate States of America, and the bloody American Civil War began.

At the onset of war, Frank James joined an elite Confederate military unit known as Quantrill's Raiders, and brother Jesse, who wasn't yet 18 when the Civil War *ended*, soon followed suit. The 200-man force, led by homicidal schoolteacher William Quantrill, included an elite sub-group led by the possibly even more homicidal William "Bloody Bill" Anderson.

Anderson once reportedly lined up a group of captured Union soldiers and personally executed all twenty-six of them. Included in his elite unit were such luminaries as Thomas Coleman "Cole" Younger and, of course, the James brothers. These men, and the rest of the Raiders, made a name for themselves during the war by repeatedly perpetrating massacres of both soldiers and civilians. The Raiders' most notorious act was the August 21, 1863 burning and pillaging of Lawrence, Kansas that left more than 150 unarmed civilians dead.

After the war, the James brothers and various others embarked upon a life of crime in the Wild West, robbing banks and trains and stagecoaches and doing all the other sorts of things that the Wild West outlaws were supposed to have done, just like they do in the books that we have all read and in the movies and television shows that we have all seen.

In April 1874, Jesse's uncle, Methodist minister William James, officiated at the wedding of Jesse to his cousin, Zerelda Amanda Mimms -- not to be confused, of course, with his mother, Zerelda Cole Mimms. Frank took as his bride a young schoolteacher named Anna Ralston.

Meanwhile, local authorities and the notorious Pinkerton organization - forerunner of the modern FBI - relentlessly pursued the James Gang in a cat-and-mouse game that now captures the imaginations of millions of Americans who are prone to view the James brothers as romantic anti-heroes.

In an example of law enforcement excess from the days of yore, the Pinkertons once reportedly tossed a bomb into the Samuels' family home. Frank and Jesse weren't there, but the blast reportedly killed their disabled half-brother and blew off one of their mother's arms.

Missouri Governor Thomas Crittenden ultimately put a \$10,000 price tag on the James brothers' heads -- an unprecedented reward in those days. Jesse was allegedly shot in the back by the Ford brothers, Charles and Robert, on April 3, 1882. He was buried on the Samuels' farm. Frank reportedly attended the services, alongside a veritable army of law enforcement officers, even though he was wanted "dead or alive" at the time.

Frank later surrendered to authorities and was brought to trial for his crimes; he was twice acquitted of all charges brought against him. Frank James remained a free man until his death in 1915. Charlie Ford, meanwhile, caught a bullet to the head, while brother Bob met up with a fatal shotgun blast.

All of that, alas, can be found in official retellings of the legend of the larger-than-life Wild West outlaw known as Jesse James. But that isn't quite the whole story, at least not according to Jesse James III and a number of witnesses cited in the James/Schrader book.

Jesse, you see, was a member of an occult-based 'secret society,' The Knights of the Golden Circle, that formed the core of the massive intelligence apparatus assembled by the Confederacy. Other key members of the order were President of the Confederacy Jefferson Davis, Albert Pike (a notorious occultist who has been credited with playing a key role in the creation of the Ku Klux Klan), and Captain William Clarke Quantrill, whose Raiders were essentially an early version of an elite, 'Special Forces' unit.

The South did in fact have an extensive intelligence infrastructure. And Albert Pike was a key figure in that intelligence network. The only real news here is the claim that Jesse James was a key figure within that intelligence community as well. And, of course, the business about The Knights of the Golden Circle.

Schrader claims, quite credibly, that the Confederate intelligence network did not simply disappear with the official end of the war; it remained largely intact and continued to fight the war from 'underground' for another two decades. And it continued to be under the control of the Knights of the Golden Circle. Jesse James remained a key figure.

The James Gang's train and bank robberies, it is claimed, were fundraising operations to finance the activities of the Knights of the Golden Circle, as well as to wreak general havoc with the plans of the Northern reconstructionists. James is also said to have been involved in supplying weapons and training to the Plains Indians, as a means of waging proxy war against the Union Army.

In 1861, at the onset of the Civil War, populist Benito Juarez had been legally elected president of Mexico. While his imperialist northern neighbor was preoccupied with waging a brutal war of self-destruction, Juarez set about instituting a number of reforms that proved to be popular with the Mexican people, but not so popular with the Western powers. In 1864, French forces dispatched by Napoleon III deposed Juarez and installed Maximilian as Emperor of Mexico. Maximilian, the brother of Austria's Emperor, Francis Joseph, had previously been the Archduke of Austria.

After the Civil War ended, Maximilian's unstable puppet regime continued to be threatened by forces loyal to Juarez. According to the Schrader book, a force composed of 2,000 Missouri cavalymen and a regiment of Confederate-led Red Bone Indians was dispatched to Mexico in support of Maximilian. When this force ran into stiff resistance, an elite force was sent to the rescue; that force was led by Captain William Quantrill and Colonel Jesse James.

History books say that Maximilian was executed by firing squad on June 19, 1867, after being captured by Juarez loyalists. Schrader and James claim that he was rescued by the James/Quantrill team and transported back to the States, where he lived out his life under the name John Maxi. The James' team also allegedly transported a vast amount of plundered wealth back to the States, for which they were richly rewarded by Maximilian.

James is said to have been one of the wealthiest and most powerful men in America, even before being rewarded by Maximilian. He is said to have invested heavily in the Texas oil boom, and to have provided financial backing for the Hughes Tool Company, founded by Howard Hughes, Sr., and the Ford Motor Company, founded by Henry Ford.

The most fascinating part of the Jesse James story, as presented by James III and Schrader, concerns another rather notorious figure in American history whose death has been called into question by numerous researchers: John Wilkes Booth.

An inconvenient and therefore unmentionable fact is that Booth was not acting as a lone assailant when he shot President Lincoln; he was acting as part of a larger conspiracy, as was openly acknowledged at the time. No fewer than six additional conspirators were brought to trial; four received death sentences and two were sentenced to life imprisonment.

Booth, of course, never stood trial. He was allegedly killed by agents who were attempting to capture him. Schrader and James, and numerous others, say that Booth's death was faked to allow him to escape prosecution and punishment. They also say that Booth, like James, was an agent of the Confederate intelligence services.

Booth is said to have functioned as a courier -- and his career, it must be said, would have provided the ideal cover for such activities. It will be recalled that Booth was one of the most popular actors of his day. As such, he traveled extensively with various productions, and therefore had the unusual ability to move rather freely between North and South.

The story goes that after killing Lincoln, Booth was given safe passage to Texas by the Confederate underground. Once there, he took the name John St. Helen and worked as a bartender. A problem arose, however, when Booth developed a drinking problem, and with it a tendency to shoot off his mouth about the life he used to lead.

Booth, in other words, became a liability that had to be dealt with. Sent to deal with the problem was none other than Jesse James, accompanied by William "Wild Bill" Lincoln, a distant cousin of the slain former president. The pair tracked Booth to Enid, Oklahoma, where he was poisoned.

Now I will be the first to admit that the claim that famed Wild West outlaw Jesse James was sent as an assassin to 'neutralize' notorious presidential assassin John Wilkes Booth seems a little, shall we say, iffy. Strangely enough though, the authors back that incredible claim up with a sworn statement by William Lincoln:

Our branch of the Lincoln family was never satisfied with what really happened to Booth, and I spent fourteen years of my life running down the true story. Strangely enough, I learned it from Jesse W. James, head of the Confederate underground. I was present at Booth's real death.

So there you have it -- the Jesse James story from a slightly different perspective than it is normally told. I leave it to each of you to decide for yourselves whether to file this one in the

'truth is stranger than fiction' file, or in the circular file. Meanwhile, I've got to move on to other things -- like the 1997 North Hollywood bank shootout, the modern version of the Gunfight at the OK Corral.

I have been reminded on several recent occasions of that notorious incident, first by a reader who had recently viewed the new television 'docudrama' allegedly depicting the event, then when I forced myself to view one of the endless repeats of the film on the *FX* channel, and then again when I happened upon this fascinating article buried deep within a recent edition of the *L.A. Times*:

One of the rifles confiscated from Buford O. Furrow Jr. on the day he killed a postal worker and wounded five people at a Los Angeles Jewish community center was sold at the same Tacoma, Wash, gun store linked to the rifle used by the Washington, D.C. snipers ... In 1997, the Tacoma retailer, Bull's Eye Shooter Supply, sold Furrow one of two .308 caliber Imbel rifles found in his van ... Authorities have also traced the Bushmaster .223-caliber semiautomatic assault rifle allegedly used by John Allen Muhammad and Lee Malvo ... to the same Tacoma gun store. After the manufacturer shipped the gun there, there are no records reflecting how it left the store, according to court records ... Authorities have traced guns involved in 52 crimes to Bull's Eye from 1997 to 2001 ... At least 238 guns - including the one allegedly used by the snipers - have "disappeared" from the store in the last three years ... (<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-jcc7jun07,1,3241028.story>)

Small world, isn't it? What are the odds that two high-profile, hopelessly contrived, stage-managed crimes, committed on opposite coasts, would have both been made possible by guns obtained from the very same gun shop located hundreds of miles from where either crime occurred? And what are we to make of the fact that that gun shop, as reported in a previous newsletter, is owned and operated by a former instructor at a U.S. Army sniper training center?

Here's another entry for the "it's a small world" collection: one of the rifles used in the North Hollywood shootout was the very same type of Bushmaster rifle that received so much media attention in the DC sniper case -- except that the North Hollywood version had been converted from semi-automatic to full-automatic function.

The recent television 'docudrama,' "44 Minutes: The North Hollywood Shootout," is, if I'm not mistaken, a *Fox* production ... and, true to form, it is a singularly bizarre and offensive piece of work. But despite being overstuffed with disinformation and deliberate omissions, the unabashedly pro-police production did refresh my memory on some of the telling details of what happened that day.

As the title of the film hints, the producers had no interest in providing any sort of context for the events that are depicted. No background on the gunmen is provided. In fact, they are never even identified, either in the film itself or in the closing credits, and their faces are covered by stocking caps throughout much of the film. They are presented as nameless and faceless representations of pure evil.

Virtually no one is identified by name in the film. The credits list such characters as "One of the Cops," "Another Cop," "News Anchor," "Uniform," and, my personal favorite, "Stud Guy." The focus is almost entirely on the shootout itself, with anonymous gunmen exchanging fire with anonymous police officers while anonymous bank employees and patrons huddle in fear and anonymous reporters provide breathless coverage of the unfolding events.

One thing that the filmmakers depict fairly accurately is the preposterously unlikely police response. Beginning the moment the robbers entered the bank, the police mobilized a massive force to surround the building. Literally within minutes (as the film title indicates, the entire incident lasted just 44 minutes from beginning to end), the LAPD had a fully staffed mobile command center up and running in a local furniture store. At the time that all of this manpower was being mobilized and coordinated, there was no indication that anything more significant than a routine bank robbery was in progress. And in L.A., that is hardly an earth-shattering event.

The last time I checked, Los Angeles was the bank robbery capital of the world. A *CNN* report concerning the North Hollywood incident revealed that in the prior year there had been "a total of 1,126 bank robberies in the Los Angeles area." Statistically speaking then, the North Hollywood robbery was but one of three that would occur in the county on that day alone. (<http://www.cnn.com/US/9702/28/bank.shootout/>)

Someone though apparently knew that this wasn't to be a typical L.A. bank robbery. Some 350 officers were ultimately dispatched to the scene, including a number of paramilitary SWAT teams. Also on hand were scores of police vehicles, fire engines, ambulances, and a 'military surplus' armored personnel carrier.

The gunmen also apparently knew that this wasn't to be a typical day in L.A. They came prepared not to rob a bank, but to wage war on the city. They were completely covered in heavy body armor, which severely hampered their movements and rendered them incapable of doing much more than standing as stationary targets throughout most of the gun battle.

In one of the most surreal spectacles ever televised, the gunmen stood fully exposed and seemingly oblivious to the hail of incoming police fire while calmly spraying the streets of North Hollywood with automatic weapons fire. One eyewitness reported that one of the gunmen looked like he was "in a trance. He was walking like there was nothing going on ... It was like he didn't have a care in the world." (<http://www.amarillonet.com/stories/stories/030197/robbers.html>)

The suspects' vehicle held a seemingly endless supply of automatic weapons and ammunition, far more than would be required to pull off a bank robbery. After the battle was over, the gunmen's vehicle still contained some 2,000 rounds of live ammo, in addition to the numerous full ammunition clips found on the bodies of the downed gunmen.

On the scene from the very beginning, long before the robbers exited the bank with guns blazing, was a *Fox News* helicopter providing a live feed to the nation. The *Fox* helicopter was soon joined by other news choppers. Amazingly enough, with seemingly half the LAPD force mobilized at the North Hollywood Bank of America branch, the department's helicopters were nowhere to be seen, and the news choppers were given free reign over the skies.

Anyone who lives anywhere in the vicinity of the crime scene knows that this is a most remarkable fact. I happen to have spent the last few years living in the vicinity of North Hollywood - or NoHo as we hipsters like to call it - and I can tell you with absolute certainty that the LAPD is not shy about deploying air power in this area.

Rarely does a night go by that an LAPD helicopter does not make a pass or two over my house. Occasionally they will, for no apparent reason, thoughtfully light up my backyard in



the middle of the night. And that is not because they are 'out to get me.' It is because I happen to live in North Hollywood. All of my neighbors get the same treatment.

The truth is that the LAPD will call in air support to write a jaywalking ticket. They are obsessed with weapons and tactics and with the 'Powell doctrine' of overwhelming force -- and they have been for a very long time. It is inconceivable, therefore, that the airspace over North Hollywood was not quickly secured and filled with LAPD helicopters the day of the shootout.

Another of the more bizarre aspects of the incident was that, as one character in the film noted, hundreds of rounds of ammunition (1,100-1,200 by official police estimates) were fired and yet only the two bad guys died ... which, come to think of it, reminds me that there were actually at least three bad guys, as was widely reported on several local live telecasts from 'ground zero.'

Initial print reports of the shootout also made mention of additional suspects. *ENN* news service, for example, reported that in addition to the two robbers killed, "three suspects are reportedly in custody; some may be wounded. A tense search continues in nearby neighborhoods for additional suspects." That search continued for more than twelve hours after the two identified suspects had been killed.

(<http://www.emergency.com/lapdbank.htm>)

*CNN* reported that police "made several arrests in connection with the shooting, but the two dead gunmen are the only two suspects known to be involved in the robbery attempt, [Police Chief] Williams said. The L.A. police chief, however, could not confirm that all of the suspects had been captured or accounted for." Williams never explained what the other unidentified suspects were being held for, if not for involvement in the robbery.

(<http://www.cnn.com/US/9702/28/bank.shootout/>)

*CNN* also quoted Police Commander Tim McBride as saying: "We have *many* suspects who have multiple guns, and they continue to out-gun us and fire at us at will." Elsewhere in the *CNN* article, the gunmen are referred to as a "band" of bank robbers. Maybe it's just me, but I don't normally think of two guys as being a "band."

The film makes several oblique mentions of "multiple perpetrators" without ever specifically saying how many gunmen there were, although the filmmakers clearly want us to believe that there were only two, both of whom died that day. Unmentioned is that a lawsuit later filed on behalf of the children of one of the suspects claimed - based on, among other things, interviews with eyewitnesses, including employees and patrons of the bank who came face-to-face with the gunmen - that there were no fewer than six gunmen involved.

How the two acknowledged gunmen were killed is deliberately obscured in the film as well. One of them, whose name was Emil Matasareanu, was tried, convicted, sentenced and executed on the streets of North Hollywood by the LAPD.

Protected by body armor, the suspect sustained wounds only to his extremities, primarily to his legs. None of his wounds was life threatening. In fact, he was pictured on the frontpage of the *Los Angeles Times*, very much alive and alert, though obviously in pain, after being handcuffed by police. It took him somewhere around 30 minutes to bleed out on the streets of NoHo, if I remember correctly, while dozens of L.A.'s finest stood idly by. Emergency medical personnel were prevented from treating him. None of that is depicted in the film.



The death of the other gunman, Larry Eugene Phillips, Jr., is portrayed quite ambiguously. He is shown raising a handgun to his own head, while an LAPD detective simultaneously draws a bead on him from a position in front of the suspect. There were claims at the time of the incident that the suspect committed suicide, and that has apparently become a part of the official mythology. It is the overriding impression that the film creates -- in spite of the fact that live video feeds clearly and unequivocally showed that the suspect took a sniper's bullet to the back of the head as he was walking down the street.

Again, early media reports accurately reported that fact. A *CNN* reporter, for instance, wrote that "cameras were rolling as police shot one suspect in the head." Similarly, an *ENN* reporter wrote: "Suddenly out of nowhere, the suspect was shot in the head and killed."

(<http://www.cnn.com/US/9702/28/bank.shootout/> and <http://www.emergency.com/lapdbank.htm>)

It was, needless to say, rather odd that the LAPD failed to take credit for the justifiable killing of one of the suspects and chose instead to put out the blatantly fraudulent suicide story. You would think that police officials would be more than eager to take credit for doing their job, but you would, in this case, be mistaken.

Instead, the LAPD chose quite deliberately to portray themselves as hopelessly outgunned and almost completely helpless to stop the mayhem. Admitting that Phillips was taken out with a sniper's bullet to the head would have revealed that the police were not in fact helpless that day and could have stopped the rampage much sooner than they did. There are clear parallels here, by the way, with the downing of Flight 93 on September 11, 2001.

A former LAPD SWAT team member, now a weapons instructor, wrote a report on the lessons to be learned from the incident. That report indicated that SWAT units were well equipped to deal with the situation: "The LAPD SWAT officers were also able to select appropriate weapons because they have the choice in their car of MP5s, M26s, Shotguns, H&K .223 caliber assault rifles and AR 15s."

(<http://www.student oulu.fi/~hmikkola/shootout.html>)

The last ten minutes of the film is devoted to an utterly shameless salute to the allegedly heroic officers of the LAPD. It is difficult to sit through, but it is there, in those final minutes of the movie, that we begin to sift out the truth of what happened that day. An actor portraying a fictional and quite heroic LAPD detective speaks the following words to an off-camera interviewer:

It's kind of weird the way it happened. The morale in the LAPD was at an all-time low. The public was all over us. And then all of a sudden, out of nowhere, this happened. After that, even the media were calling us heroes.

True enough, although the media hadn't exactly been on the attack prior to that, but rather had been actively engaged in covering up the massive corruption and criminality of the LAPD. That task was much easier to accomplish in the aftermath of the North Hollywood shootout.

Fully militarizing the LAPD was a much easier goal to attain as well. At the very end of the film, the following words appear on screen: "As a result of the North Hollywood shoot-out, LAPD officers now have access to M-16 machine guns when on patrol in the field."

That's certainly good news. I for one feel much better knowing that LAPD officers, while on routine patrol, have access to fully automatic weapons. Nothing is quite so reassuring as

knowing that the next officer to pull me over for a traffic infraction could have an M-16 trained on my head as he approaches my vehicle.

The LAPD obtained 600 'surplus' M-16s for its officers. That is how the Pentagon described the guns that it gave to the department. I've never figured out though why it is that brand new, fully operational M-16s, or any other type of weaponry routinely used by U.S. servicemen, would be considered 'surplus.'

What are we, in the final analysis, to make of the North Hollywood shootout? The entire incident had a distinctively staged, surreal, made-for-television flavor. As one witness noted, it was "just like a movie." (<http://www.emergency.com/lapdbank.htm>) In fact, as one report mentioned, it was just like one particular movie:

The shooting recalled the bloody 1995 movie "Heat," starring Robert De Niro and Al Pacino, in which a band of meticulously organized but high-strung bandits hold up a downtown Los Angeles bank. The movie robbers burst into the bank in black clothes and full-body armor, then most are killed in a wild running gun battle through downtown traffic.

(<http://www.amarillonet.com/stories/stories/030197/robbers.html>)

Perhaps it was appropriate then that "the shootout occurred," as *CNN* noted, "not far from the Disney, Universal and Warner Bros. studios."

And now, before signing off, I must take time here to thank all of you who wrote in response to Newsletter #37, including Brendon, Jim, Mick, David, Mark, Henry, Brock, Vicki, Jean, Sandra, Peter, Tracey, Margie, Edward, Arlene, Sherry, Meria, Al, Larry, and a few anonymous others. My sincerest thanks to all of you.

Special thanks to Reuven, whose words rang so true; and to Bill, a local 'soapbox orator' extraordinaire; and to John and Reggie, who sent in links to two sites that I haven't had time yet to check out ([communistvoice.org](http://communistvoice.org) and [tvnewslies.org](http://tvnewslies.org)); and to David, for generously offering his assistance; and to Bruce, for informing me that, during my absence, The Smirk redesignated the international workers' holiday of May Day as "Loyalty Day."

I had seen that story circulate previously (as Bruce pointed out, Bush first signed such a bill last year, and then did so again this year), but had thought that it was a satirical piece, courtesy of some muckraking website like *The Onion*. I had forgotten, briefly, that this administration is so over-the-top that the dividing line between parody and reality has all but disappeared.

(<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/04/20030430-26.html>)

As a final note, to the reader who inquired, the answer to your question is, no, I did not travel to Tahiti on behalf of the CIA. I should have mentioned in the last newsletter, by the way, that the islands of French Polynesia are some of the most preternaturally beautiful islands in the world. And I must confess here that I have a weakness for lush tropical islands. So if the CIA is interested in funding an extended visit to Tahiti, all expenses paid, I wouldn't necessarily be opposed. Hawaii would be good also. Or maybe Fiji. I haven't been there yet.

And that, I suppose, will suffice for this week ... oh, wait a minute ... I almost forgot to mention one last thing: you know that story about how the famous inventor and statesman Benjamin Franklin flew that kite in the thunderstorm? Well ... it turns out that old Ben just sort of invented that story

(<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/06/01/1054406077856.html>). And now the Russians

are saying that we may not have actually landed on the moon ([http://english.pravda.ru/printed.html?news\\_id=9994](http://english.pravda.ru/printed.html?news_id=9994)). And the Finns are saying that Al Qaeda doesn't really exist (<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/uriks/article.jhtml?articleID=396241>). Next thing you know, someone is going to be saying that Iraq didn't really have any weapons of mass destruction, or that the Jessica Lynch rescue story is an "amerikansk fiksjon." It's getting to where I just don't know what to believe anymore.

## **NEWSLETTER #51**

*March 1, 2004*

*Gay Marriage Edition*

It is becoming increasingly clear that the fraudulent recall election that brought Herr Schwarzenegger to power was just one aspect of a well-coordinated, 'bipartisan' effort to fundamentally transform the state of California. In the name of curing all the manufactured ills of the Golden State, a prescription has apparently been written, and Ahhnuld may just be the man to fill it.

That prescription was unveiled in a 'historic' television event that aired on *KCET's* "California Connected" program on February 19, 2004. Assembled to reveal and lend legitimacy to the agenda was a 'distinguished' group of former California governors: Jerry Brown, George Deukmejian, Pete Wilson and Gray Davis (Ronald Reagan was conspicuously absent).

Although two of the four are known as staunchly conservative 'Republicans,' and the other two are widely regarded as bleeding-heart liberal 'Democrats,' the Fab Four presented a remarkably united front while spelling out the plan for resolving California's woes. It was almost as if - though only a conspiracy theorist would suggest such a thing - they had all been studying the same script.

[Speaking of 'conspiracy theorists,' I need to pause here to note that White House liar Scott McClellan, desperate to dodge persistent questions during a recent press conference ([http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/week\\_2004\\_02\\_08.html#002555](http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/archives/week_2004_02_08.html#002555)), trotted out that pejorative term in a pathetic attempt to dismiss the line of questioning. That got me wondering what McClellan would call someone who promotes a half-baked theory that holds that Lyndon Johnson was JFK's killer ... but then I remembered what he calls him: "Dad." ([http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0963784625/qid=1077612794/sr=1-1/ref=sr\\_1\\_1/103-9214591-3138267?v=glance&s=books](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0963784625/qid=1077612794/sr=1-1/ref=sr_1_1/103-9214591-3138267?v=glance&s=books))]

The members of the Former Governors Club unanimously agreed that the single greatest impediment to 'reforming' state government was the Legislature. No one on the panel had anything remotely positive to say about the state's lawmakers. In fact, as it turns out, it wasn't really Gray Davis' fault that the state is in crisis; it is actually the fault of the Legislature.

Deukmejian, no friend of 'Democrats,' praised the man he addressed as "my friend, Gray Davis," for attempting to govern "from the center." The problem, according to Duke, was that the Legislature just "kept pressuring him, and pressuring him, and pressuring him to spend more money," until Davis finally capitulated. Pete Wilson readily agreed, explaining that the real problem was not Gray Davis, but that "Gray had maybe the most irresponsible Legislature within memory."

The Pete Wilson who said that, by the way, looked very much like the Pete Wilson who just months ago played a prominent role in the recall effort as a key Team Ahhnuld operative.

One of the biggest problems with the Legislature, according to the Fab Four, is that lawmakers have managed to gerrymander their districts to create 'safe seats' for themselves, thereby insuring their continued incumbency. According to Deukmejian, "all the incumbents got together" and worked out this devious plan to permanently entrench themselves. As a result, according to Wilson, "the 'ins' stay in, and the 'outs' stay out." And since the 'ins' all feel safe now, they are very difficult to work with. All they seem to want to do is spend money the state doesn't have and pass laws the state doesn't need.

On that issue, the four members of the Former Governors Barbershop Quartet harmonized perfectly -- probably because all four are reprehensible liars. The truth of the matter is that California has very strict term limits that were enacted by the people of California through a ballot initiative. State assemblymen get exactly six years on the job and they're out the door, regardless of which district they represent. There is no such thing as a 'safe' seat in California. Districts can be gerrymandered to create seats for one party or the other, but there are no entrenched incumbents in the California Legislature. Not a one.

And that, from the point of view of those who matter, is the real 'problem' facing California. Simply put, the lack of entrenched and thoroughly corrupted incumbents has resulted in a Legislature that is entirely too independent. If you pay close attention as Deukmejian explains how to 'fix' the Legislature, you may detect a very convoluted, and quite revealing, argument: Virtually all [incumbents] are in safe districts, so we don't have real competition for those seats any longer. And in my opinion, there's two things we can do, structurally, to help to improve this situation. One is, we have term limits in California, and while I agree that term limits has a good purpose, especially for those who overstay their welcome, I think the terms are too short. And so I think we could have an initiative that would combine increasing the term limits to twelve years - have that as the maximum, rather than six years as it is now for the assembly, or eight years for the senate - but also, as a part of that, let's have an independent commission - independent from the Legislature - draw those district boundary lines ... [then] Legislators would get longer terms and, at the same time, there would be more competition for those positions.

Sounds great! Maybe we can get Tom DeLay to put together that 'independent' commission for us, if he isn't too busy. And maybe if the longer terms work out, we can just do away with the term limits entirely. That ought to fix the problem.

In case that type of 'reform' doesn't create a sufficiently corrupt Legislature, Gray Davis chimed in with another suggestion: "Let me give you another possible reform. Jess Unruh instituted a lot of reforms in this state. One of them that I think we ought to reexamine is the full time Legislature ... I really believe that we ought to limit the amount of time that people spend legislating." Deukmejian, Brown and Wilson, meanwhile, advocated bypassing the Legislature entirely through the use of ballot initiatives.

While weakening the Legislature is obviously a major goal, it is also important that we not forget to, at the same time, expand the power of the chief executive of the state. Jerry Brown twice tackled that subject, with Pete Wilson both times providing the 'bipartisan' consensus: Brown: California can be governed, but the executive has to take responsibility ... like Governor Schwarzenegger is doing now.

Wilson: I agree with Jerry -- I think that you need a strong executive.

Brown: I think that's the imbalance -- a weakened chief executive.

Wilson: What [Schwarzenegger] is gonna have to do is what Jerry Brown just said a governor should do: he should be an aggressive chief executive.

Pete Wilson also tossed out another suggestion for reforming the state: do away with the silly practice of actually electing various state officials. Sneaky Pete had a better idea: "I think that the governor ought to appoint most of the other constitutional - what are now constitutional - officers."

So there you have it, folks -- the prescription for 'reforming' California's political system. Let's quickly review, shall we? We need to: (1) expand the power of the governor's office, creating a "strong executive"; (2) bestow upon that strong executive the power to appoint most, or all, other state officials; and (3) weaken, corrupt, or, when all else fails, bypass the state Legislature.

I hate to rain on this parade, but that almost sounds like a formula for the creation of a dictatorship. But I guess we shouldn't expect anything less from the Former Governors Club. As Deukmejian candidly acknowledged, "the real truth is that every one of us would have preferred to be benevolent dictators in the office." Without a Legislature to hold them back, according to Sir Duke, "we could have really made tremendous improvements in California -- if we'd had all the power, you know."

Yeah, I do know, George. But I guess as long as we're talking about a "benevolent" dictatorship, then it won't be so bad. And Schwarzenegger seems like a benevolent kind of guy, so we probably have nothing to worry about. In case you missed it, by the way, Ahnuld revealed on *Meet the Press* that he is in favor of Senator Orrin Hatch's proposal to scrap the constitutional requirement that U.S. presidents be native born. So I guess the Plastic Man is hoping to take his 'benevolent dictator' act to Washington. Who would have guessed?

\* \* \* \* \*

I almost forgot to mention that the Former Governors Club had another idea: open all of California to legalized gambling, with the state receiving, according to Deukmejian, a "good, sizable amount of the revenue."

Another great idea from George Deukmejian! Why raise taxes when you can entice the economically desperate to just *give* the state money? Jerry Brown, who helms a city with some of the most impoverished "inner city" neighborhoods in the state, loved the idea. Oakland, he said, could sure use some casinos: "Give me a few billboards on scenic highways and a few gambling casinos, and we'll have no more fiscal challenges."

It's good to see that "Governor Moonbeam" is still thinking 'outside the box.'

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Before continuing, I really need to address the issue of spam. Actually, what I would like to do is make an open appeal to the spammers of the world. But first, let me say that I am doing everything that I can to work with you guys. I really am. For example, I have learned to live with your constant insinuations that I am neither adequately equipped nor functional. I have also learned to live with the constant solicitations for Vicodin, Vioxx and Oxycontin. In fact, I now put those to good use: instead of just deleting them, which would be such a waste, I forward them all to Rush Limbaugh. So as you can see, I am doing everything possible to drum up business for you. And in return, I ask only one small favor: could we please leave my colon out of this?

\* \* \* \* \*

Has anyone heard anything about Saddam Hussein lately? I'm just curious, since he seemed to be the talk of the town just a couple of months ago, and now he seems to have dropped completely out of sight.

I have to confess here that I was a little baffled by the capture. There is usually a certain logic to almost everything that Team Bush does, once one accepts the ugly reality of the world that we live in. But the capture of Saddam made no sense at all, since the primary accomplishment, beyond all the media spin, was depriving Washington of the last fraudulent justification for a continued American military presence in Iraq.

The 'weapons of mass destruction' thing obviously hasn't worked out. And the 'Al Qaeda connection' never really panned out either. The only thing we had left was our noble goal of freeing the Iraqi people from the tyranny of Saddam's cruel regime. So now that the King of the Evildoers has been captured, and both his sons have been killed, and all but ten of his 'Most Wanted' henchmen have been captured or killed (according to the Bush propaganda mill), isn't it about time for G.I. George to suit up, shove a sock down his pants, and unfurl that "Mission Accomplished" banner once again? Isn't our work done?

Several claims made repeatedly by the Bush administration were exposed by the capture as lies. We had been told, for example, that Saddam was leading the resistance movement. But the suggestion that an organized resistance movement was directed from a crude hole in the ground seems as preposterous as the notion that the September 11 attacks were planned in a cave in Afghanistan.

We had been frequently reassured that Saddam could lead us to those elusive 'weapons of mass destruction.' But in a strange turn of events, the weapons inspection teams were pulled just after Hussein's capture, after not only failing in their mission to find actual 'weapons of mass destruction,' but after failing to even find any facilities capable of producing 'weapons of mass destruction.'

We had also been told that many in Iraq were not yet willing to work with America in effecting 'regime change' because they feared that America was not going to 'finish the job,' and that Saddam would one day return. But it was immediately clear that the capture did nothing to lessen the resistance to the U.S. occupation.

Saddam was obviously of far more propaganda value when he was still at large. And that is why I, and I'm sure many others, were left scratching our heads over the unexpected turn of events ... until, that is, I discovered that it was actually Kurds who had captured Saddam. And they had, obviously without running the idea past the White House, loudly trumpeted that fact to the international media, before any announcements were forthcoming from the Pentagon or the U.S. media.

So Washington, as it turns out, really had no choice but to announce the capture of the not-so-elusive Hussein. Making the best of an unwelcome situation, the capture was spun as such a huge victory for Sir George that it all but insured him a second term in office. Saddam was then quickly shuffled out of the media spotlight.

I did hear something recently about Hussein having cancer, but then that story seemed to quickly disappear as well. Wouldn't that be something if Hussein were to die of natural causes before being held accountable for his alleged war crimes? It's kind of a shame, when you think about it, that our intelligence people didn't pick up on the cancer before the war, because

then they would have known that 'regime change' was coming even without the military assault. But I guess they blew that one, just like they blew the call on 'Weapons of Mass Destruction.'

Oh, didn't you hear? It was all the CIA's fault. None of the fine and noble public servants in the Bush administration lied. They just drew erroneous conclusions based on the faulty intelligence they got from those chronic bumbler over there at Langley. Those guys are always screwing something up. In fact, this isn't the first time they have blown a call on Bush's watch. You may recall that we already played the Blame the CIA Game after that little 9-11 incident. You may also recall that it is kind of a win-win game for Washington. The White House wins by shifting blame elsewhere, exonerating all key members of Team Bush. But then in a strange twist, Langley wins as well, since no one is fired, or even reprimanded, and the agency is showered with billions of dollars in additional funding and granted expanded powers, ostensibly so that we don't have these types of screw-ups in the future.

I'm feeling generous today, so I am going to offer to save a lot of time and taxpayer money by solving the great mystery of the Iraq intelligence failure: they lied. They lied repeatedly. And when I say "they," I don't mean just a few Team Bush players. I mean that the White House lied, the State Department lied, the Pentagon lied, the intelligence community lied, countless think tank 'analysts' lied, Representatives and Senators lied, 'Republicans' and 'Democrats' lied, and last but surely not least, the entire U.S. media establishment lied. And it was painfully obvious that they all were lying because they weren't even telling good lies, but rather recycled lies that had already been thoroughly discredited.

As for Saddam, his fate remains unclear. We all know that we won't likely see him surface in a public trial. The only thing we can be sure of is that America has lost a great bogeyman -- a great personification of the 'War on Terror' and a great justification for both waging it and expanding it. Luckily, we still have Osama bin Laden.

\* \* \* \* \*

The *Los Angeles Times*, like the rest of the U.S. media establishment, missed the story about the extraordinarily violent police repression of the demonstrations in Miami outside the 'Free Trade Area of the Americas' meeting. If I remember correctly, some surgically altered member of the Jackson family was causing some kind of commotion at the time, and every reporter in the free world was on top of that monumentally important story.

Perhaps feeling guilty for the lack of initial coverage, the *Times* rectified the situation on December 21, 2003 -- by burying a story on page A36 in the "In Brief" section. The article, headlined "Police a 'Disgrace' at Protests, Judge Says," is reproduced here in its entirety: Police conduct was a "disgrace for the community" during demonstrations in Miami at the Free Trade Area of the Americas meeting, according to a judge presiding over several protesters' cases. In a court transcript, Circuit Judge Richard Margolius also said he saw at least 20 felonies committed by police. "Pretty disgraceful what I saw with my own eyes. And I have always supported the police during my entire career," Margolius said. "This was a real eye-opener. A disgrace for the community."

Judge Margolius' observations are indeed "a real eye-opener." Such was the level of open criminality by the Miami Police Department that a presumably casual observer of just a portion of the mayhem "saw at least 20 felonies committed by police." That would be, lest there be any misunderstanding, at least 20 felonies committed against peaceful, unarmed, lawfully assembled citizens, including a good number of senior citizens. At least 20 felonies committed by officers outfitted as faceless, anonymous, futuristic soldiers.



But we don't live in a police state, so don't go thinking otherwise. If we did, the *Los Angeles Times* would surely be the first to let us know.

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Speaking of underreported stories in the *Times*, another one turned up on February 29, 2004, in the "In Brief" section on page A4. The article, concerning the airplane crash that killed Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski on February 26, is reproduced here. Pay particular attention to the first sentence:

Weather, human error or technical failure may have caused Thursday's air crash that killed Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski in Bosnia, but foul play can be ruled out, Macedonian deputy public prosecutor Roksanda Krstevska said. Officials said they would wait for investigators to finish their work before setting a date for elections to choose a successor. The government set up a panel to work on meeting a requirement that the vote be held in 40 days.

Parliament Speaker Ljubco Jordanovski has been named interim acting president.

So here is the scenario: investigators are claiming to have no idea yet what caused the plane crash. It could have been a problem with the pilot. It could have been a problem with the aircraft. It could have been a problem with the flying conditions. The door is wide open -- to any sort of accidental cause. And yet "foul play" can already be definitively ruled out. Investigators do not yet know whether the aircraft experienced any technical failures, but they do know that no one deliberately caused the plane to experience any technical failures. They don't know if the pilot committed any fatal errors, but they do know that no one took any actions to cause the pilot to commit any fatal errors.

As a general rule of thumb, whenever "foul play" is categorically ruled out before any sort of real investigation has even begun, it is a fairly safe bet that there was "foul play" involved. But that sort of thing, of course, only happens in places like Macedonia -- never here in the good old U.S. of A. ... right? I mean, unless you want to be a nitpicker and bring up Wellstone. Or Carnahan. Or Boggs. Or Begich. Or ...

\* \* \* \* \*

The wife (who demanded that she be fully credited) happened to stumble across a legal "Motion to Suppress" filed by attorneys Owen Walker and Elizabeth L. Prevett in the case *United States of America v. Richard Colvin Reid, United States District Court, District of Massachusetts (Criminal Case #02-10013-WGY)*.

I did not follow the 'Shoebomber' case when it was being flogged mercilessly by the media, so I don't know if the information contained in the defense motion received much circulation. If this comes as old news to you, then I offer my apologies for the belated reporting.

One intriguing fact brought to light by the defense motion was that Reid, after being "restrained by several male passengers and tied up by members of the flight crew," was "forcibly medicated by an injection into his abdomen of 10 mg Diazepam (Valium) and 0.4 mg Narcan ... Approximately an hour before landing, he was forcibly injected with medication a third time, by an injection into his abdomen of 25 mg of Phenegren."

Pardon me for asking, but is it normal practice for airlines to carry powerful, injectable drugs on routine flights? And why is there no mention of exactly who it was that injected Reid? Who on that airplane had the expertise, the medical supplies, and the authority to forcibly drug someone? And why is it not a felony offense to repeatedly assault a man of unknown

drug tolerances and allergies with a potentially deadly weapon? And why, if Reid was already drugged and securely bound, and therefore no longer posing a threat to anyone, was he drugged again shortly before landing?

The American Airlines flight, bound for Miami, landed instead at Boston's Logan Airport at 12:55 PM. Reid was promptly taken into custody by Massachusetts State Police officers. While in a police cruiser awaiting transport to the State Police station at Logan, he had a brief, but interesting, conversation with an officer: "Defendant asked several times why no media were present and there was a short discussion about whether the event was a 'big deal' or not. At some point, defendant said: 'You'll see, you'll see.'"

How did Reid know that his arrest, apparently considered no "big deal" by arresting officers, would be inflated by Washington and the media into a major 'terrorist' event? Did Reid know that he was very soon to be immortalized as the "Shoe Bomber"?

After Reid had been held at the Logan station for a few hours, FBI agents summoned emergency medical technicians to assess his condition. The two responding EMTs, who arrived at 4:20 PM, "were told that defendant had been restrained and forcibly medicated in unknown dosages."

If officers had no idea what dosages had been administered to Reid, why did they wait three-and-a-half hours to seek medical attention? And how did they later arrive at the precise dosages listed in the defense motion? And, again, who administered those drugs, and on whose authority?

After contacting their supervisor, the EMTs "made it clear to the FBI that defendant should be taken to a hospital for evaluation ... At approximately 4:56 PM, the FBI permitted [the EMTs] to enter defendant's cell and take his vital signs." Reid's "vital signs were off," and the EMTs again stressed that Reid needed to be taken to a hospital. "The FBI told the EMT's that the agents needed to talk to defendant for about 15 minutes before the EMT's took him to a hospital." Reid was then taken to an interview room where he was questioned by two FBI Special Agents and a Security Service Agent from the U.S. State Department.

Reid never made it to the hospital. The EMTs remained at the station for at least the first three hours of the interrogation. Their requests to see the defendant and assess his condition were ignored by the FBI. At around midnight, seven hours after the "15 minute" interrogation of the heavily drugged, and unrepresented, defendant began, Reid was transported to a county jail.

It is probably safe to say that the Shoe Bomber case can proudly take its place alongside the DC Sniper case and the uninvestigated Anthrax attacks as yet another staged 'terrorist' incident. Let's cut to the chase here, folks: it's all bullshit. All you have to do is scratch beneath the surface a little bit to see that the official stories just never seem to add up.

\* \* \* \* \*

Coming in the next edition: I respond to an angry letter from Michael Ruppert in which he issues an unusual challenge. Who knew he even read this stuff? I guess one of his people must have alerted him that he was being blasphemed by some crackpot on the Internet. On the same day that Ruppert's e-mail arrived in my in-box, I received a missive from a prominent critic of his (which I will also respond to). Suddenly my opinion is so monumentally important that both sides are eager to point out the errors of my ways. And then, strangely enough, I received

requests for not one, but two, radio interviews! What can I say? A guy gets to feeling a little cranky, sends out a couple of contrary newsletters, and suddenly everyone wants to talk. Go figure.

[A final note: with the Columbine bloodbath back in the news, I received a few inquiries about my past musings on that subject. The postings that you are searching for are at <http://davesweb.cncost.com/littleton.htm> and <http://davesweb.cncost.com/nwsltr8.html> (scroll down; it is the last topic covered).]

## **NEWSLETTER #73**

**October 23, 2005**

***Katrina, Eugenics and 'Peak Oil'***

***<http://www.davesweb.cnchost.com/nwsltr73.html>***

So ... I thought that I'd try the old "fake my [death](#) and boost sales" charade, 'cause I heard that it worked great for the Beatles back in the '60s, but it hasn't worked out all that well for me, to tell you the truth, which is why, for better or worse, I'm back. Did anyone miss me?

I have a lot of catching up to do, so much so that I don't really know where to begin, but I guess I'll start with the following brief news story, which I happened to stumble upon while digging deep within a recent edition of the Los Angeles Times:

### **KATRINA'S AFTERMATH**

**Cuban Hurricane Preparation Offers Lessons in Organization**

*Los Angeles Times*

September 10, 2005; Page A30

HAVANA — Cubans have no Astrodome or cruise ships to house evacuees, and meals-ready-to-eat usually consist of rice and beans.

But they have weathered some of the most violent storms the tropics can churn up, with surprisingly low death tolls and almost perfect compliance with evacuation orders.

Last year, United Nations emergency relief coordinator Jan Egeland singled out Cuba for praise among Caribbean nations for hurricane evacuation planning. When Hurricane Ivan swiped the island last September, for example, Cuba didn't record a single death, but 115 people died regionally. The same month, Hurricane Jeanne killed more than 1,500 in Haiti, many drowning in floodwaters.

Now, as analysts and politicians examine how the U.S. government responded to Hurricane Katrina — and how to avoid a similar catastrophe — some say this communist island may offer a few lessons.

Cuban evacuations are mostly carried out by community groups that take cues from the government. The military assists, unarmed.

"Cuba views hurricanes as a top national security priority, and they know the drill," said Daniel P. Erikson, Caribbean specialist at the Inter-American Dialogue, a Washington think tank. The storms not only imperil lives, he said, but threaten Cuba's economic underpinnings: agriculture and tourism.

"The drill" Erikson refers to includes yearly military exercises across the island, with two-day training sessions for emergency workers, simulated evacuations and reviews of emergency plans.

During hurricanes, Cuba's four state-run television stations run nonstop evacuation orders and weather reports. The coverage is anchored by President Fidel Castro, who coordinates response during live broadcasts as if waging battle against an invading army.

"It's an organized system, in a pyramid structure," said Dr. Gabriel Diaz Ramirez, a Cuban pediatrician dispatched to Indonesia this year to treat tsunami survivors. "We have our government's support."

Perhaps the most striking element of Cuba's disaster preparedness is that most residents obey evacuation orders without question. The government says it evacuated 1.5 million people in July ahead of Hurricane Dennis. Most went to safe zones, and 245,000 flocked to state-run shelters.

This contrasts starkly with New Orleans, where thousands decided to ride out the storm and were later plucked from flooded attics or perished. Others are still refusing to leave, even with toxic muck on the streets and armed forces moving in to carry out mandatory evacuations.

Erikson suggested that the smooth displacements were a product of the government's tight control over residents.

"It's still a police state," he said. "You could say one advantage they may have is the ability to move large numbers of people in a short amount of time.

"But of course the political environment in Cuba makes it difficult to resist those kinds of orders."

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-cuba10sep10,1,3142651,print.story?coll=la-home-headlines&ctrack=1&cset=true>

Stupid fucking Commies! Can you imagine a government actually demonstrating concern for the health and safety of the people? What are they thinking over there? And what is this business of sending in the military *unarmed*, as if they were being sent in to do some sort of humanitarian work? How in the hell are you going to issue shoot-to-kill orders if your relief workers aren't even packing heat? Those pinkoes are just so damn backwards in their thinking. I mean, who the hell relies on "community groups" when you can just get on the phone and call in some professional mercenaries?

[\(Blackwater Mercenaries Deploy in New Orleans\)](#) Come to think of it, I bet they don't even have any 'private' paramilitary outfits in Cuba. They do though have an awful lot of medical doctors. So many that they offered to send over a veritable army of 1,100 of them to tend to the victims of Katrina. The Bush administration, however, realizing that the presence of swarms of qualified medical personnel could negatively impact their denegrofication project, declined the offer.

The writer and editor of the L.A. Times piece, after consulting their trusty copy of "Orwell for Dummies," concluded that Cuba is better at responding to disasters because "it's still a police state." But that much is rather obvious, since, as any fool knows, a "police state" is one that responds to natural disasters by sending in actual relief workers, while a "democracy" generally responds to natural disasters by militarily occupying the zone of destruction and criminalizing the survivors. Most of you probably remember learning all that stuff back in your Civics classes.

There is, of course, an alternative explanation for why the Cuban people willingly follow evacuation orders while the residents of New Orleans were reluctant to do so. Granted, the alternative explanation lacks the disconnection from reality so clearly on display in the *Times* article, but we should probably give it some consideration nonetheless, so here it is: *the Cuban people know that after the danger has passed, they will actually be allowed to return to their homes!*

The people of New Orleans, on the other hand, had good reason to fear that they would not.

It is painfully obvious that many of the former residents of New Orleans will never be going home. Many did not survive, though we will never know the true number since it was apparent from early on that the death toll would be covered up. Of those who did survive, many have seen the last of their family homes. Residents of New Orleans probably didn't realize it at the time, but the stage was set two months before Katrina came ashore, on June 23, 2005, when the U.S. Supreme Court, in its infinite wisdom, decreed that it was well within the 'rule of law' for the government to seize what is ostensibly privately held land so that that land can then be passed into the grubby, bloody hands of developers.

The stage was actually set earlier than that, in April 2005, when the United States Congress, in *its* infinite wisdom, opted to pass some bankruptcy 'reform' legislation. I'll defer to the L.A. Times once again for an explanation of exactly how that 'reform' will come into play:

After virtually every major hurricane of the last 25 years, bankruptcy filings have grown significantly faster than usual as victims sought to shake off old debts in order to rebuild their economically ruined lives.

But unless changes are made to an overhaul of the nation's bankruptcy law due to kick in next month, many of those affected by Hurricane Katrina and the resulting floods will have a substantially harder time

winning court relief from loans they incurred for homes and businesses that are now gone, according to a variety of judges, lawyers and policy experts.

“Just because your house or car is somewhere in the Gulf of Mexico doesn’t mean that your auto loan or mortgage went with it,” said Brady C. Williamson, who was appointed by President Clinton to head a national bankruptcy commission in the mid-1990s. ([Peter Gosselin “New Bankruptcy Law Could Exact a Toll on Storm Victims,” Los Angeles Times, September 7, 2005](#))

Imagine, if you will, this purely – *ahem* – ‘hypothetical’ scenario (which, as we all know, could never happen in the land of the free and home of the brave): under the pretense that conditions are far too dangerous for you to stay, you and your family are forced from your family home by heavily armed troops. You are then shipped off, against your will, to some distant, unspecified location, where your actions are monitored lest you decide to do something crazy, such as attempting to return to what you, quite foolishly, still think of as your home. That home, meanwhile, is condemned and quickly bulldozed, though the actual damage to the property was quite minimal. The ground that your house used to stand on is seized by the government and will soon serve as the home of the “Pirates of the Caribbean” ride at the new Disneyland New Orleans®. Having been stripped of everything that you once called your own – including your home and all its furnishings, the land it stood on, your vehicle(s), and your job – and having been separated from your friends and neighbors, you are now faced with the daunting prospect of completely rebuilding your life with little to work with other than a mountain of debt, which, you are quickly assured, you will be required to pay back. And guess what? This month’s payments are already past due.

If you were ever to find yourself in this ‘hypothetical’ predicament, which of the following would best describe your situation? (a) I live in some sort of hellish, Kafkaesque police state; (b) I live in the world’s greatest democracy; or (c) I’m Caucasian, so this doesn’t really apply to me – yet.

I have to admit that I am quite impressed at the amazing foresight displayed by the Washington gang in getting these new and vastly improved interpretations of “bankruptcy” and “eminent domain” on the books just in time to serve the needs of the victims of Hurricane Katrina. And I am also quite impressed with Washington’s propaganda unit, otherwise known as “Hollywood,” which continues to demonstrate an uncanny ability to serve up “product” that offers commentary on ongoing events, despite the fact that that product was filmed long before the events even took place.

Consider, for example, the new television series “Invasion,” which debuted on September 21, just a few short weeks after the flooding of New Orleans, and just three days before Rita came ashore. Two curious facts about this new show stood out even before the first episode aired: (1) ABC chose to premier it along with the rest of its slate of new Fall shows even though it was obviously in very poor taste to do so; and (2) there was not a whimper of protest from any avenue of the media over that decision.

For those who have not seen “Invasion” (and you are all excused for that oversight, since the series, shockingly enough, sucks), it concerns the rather strange goings-on in the aftermath of – are you ready for this? – a Gulf Coast hurricane. Prominently featured on the program are frequent allusions to governmental cover-ups. The hurricane that kicked off the series, you see, was apparently not your run-of-the-mill hurricane. According to one character on the show – a character who, as custom dictates, is portrayed as a paranoid ‘conspiracy theorist’ with a fondness for aliens – the hurricane was actually an elaborate “cover for a military operation.” Elsewhere in the premier episode, a young girl spoke cryptically about how “the truth will never come out” because the media wouldn’t hang around for long before they moved on to other things. (These may or may not be exact quotes; I wasn’t taking notes.)

Despite being a mediocre show at best, “Invasion” has received rave reviews from many supposed critics. The fact that the show is on the air at all, despite the obvious insensitivity shown to the tens of thousands of victims of Katrina and Rita, coupled with the fact that it is actually being praised, rather than questioned, would seem to indicate that some powerful folks in the Washington/Hollywood axis feel that it is important that “Invasion” be seen by the viewing public.

And that, of course, raises the obvious question: *why* is it important that this show be seen? My guess is that it is probably because at the very time when people of conscience should be asking questions not too dissimilar from those raised in “Invasion,” Hollywood has already, in its inimitable style, proactively relegated such concerns to the world of television fantasies. And, of course, thrown a bunch of aliens into the mix. Can anal probes be far behind?

Perhaps we should throw caution to the wind and have a quick look at some of the ‘conspiracy theories’ surrounding Hurricane Katrina. There certainly is no shortage of them out there. Probably the most elaborate theories are the ones claiming that the government actually *created* Katrina, using advanced, ‘black’ technology. Personally, I find that scenario to be highly unlikely. And yes, by the way, I am well aware that control of the weather has been, for some time now, an explicitly stated goal of the U.S. military. And yes, I am also well aware of the HAARP project in Alaska. However, there is a big difference between having the desire and willingness to do something, and having the technological ability to actually do it. And I seriously doubt that the technology to create and control manmade weather systems currently exists. I seriously doubt that mankind even has an accurate understanding of how naturally-occurring weather systems operate, which would seem to be a prerequisite for creating artificial systems.

A related theory is the one that holds that while Katrina was not necessarily artificially created, it was deliberately *steered* into New Orleans. Again, this seems very unlikely – more plausible than the creation theories, I suppose, but still very unlikely. And the truth of the matter is that what these almost entirely speculative theories primarily do is draw attention away from the real question that needs to be asked here, which is: *was Hurricane Katrina even the primary cause of the devastation in New Orleans, or did it just provide a convenient “cover for a military operation”?*



Already long forgotten, by both the media and the always well-informed American public, is that there was a bizarrely long gap between when Katrina came ashore and when the levees were breached. Also long forgotten is that the earliest reports out of New Orleans held that the city had been spared from a direct hit, and the storm had therefore done considerably less damage than anticipated.

Captain Nora Tyson – commander of the USS Bataan, a Navy ship that first rode out the storm in the Gulf of Mexico before following it to shore – perfectly summed up the initial feeling about the storm’s impact on New Orleans: “On Monday it was like, ‘Wow, it missed us, it took a turn east,’ and everything eased up. It was ‘Let’s open up Bourbon Street, have a beer, let’s go party,’ and understandably so. And then all of a sudden, literally and figuratively, the dam broke, and here we are.” ([Stephen J. Hedges “Navy Ship Nearby Underused,” Chicago Tribune, September 4, 2005](#))

According to the Los Angeles Times, Wall Street was feeling in a celebratory mood as well: “Hurricanes are never good news for insurance companies. But by veering east of New Orleans on Monday, Hurricane Katrina may have saved insurers a bundle. Major casualty insurers saw only modest losses on Wall Street ...” (Kathy M. Kristof “Insurers Reevaluate Hurricane’s Losses,” Los Angeles Times, August 30, 2005, Page C2) On the front page of the same newspaper, Katrina was said to have “delivered a hard but glancing blow to New Orleans, then spent its full fury on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, swamping beach resorts and inland towns.” (Scott Gold and Ellen Barry “Katrina Hits the Gulf Coast,” Los Angeles Times, August 30, 2005, Page A1)

That “glancing blow” would have serious repercussions – but not until the next day. Hurricane Katrina arrived on the shores of New Orleans on Monday morning, August 29. By the time night fell on the partially evacuated city, it appeared as though the danger had passed and New Orleans had successfully dodged a bullet. The Category 4 winds never really materialized, the rain was no match for New Orleans’ formidable pumping system, and all 350 miles of the city’s system of levees and canals held fast against the feared storm surges. Until, that is, the wee hours of the morning of Tuesday, August 30, when three canals (the 17<sup>th</sup> Street Canal, the London Street Canal and the Industrial Canal, *aka* the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal) suffered major breaches in no less than five separate locations.

The official story, for the first several weeks, was that storm surges from the mighty Katrina were simply too much for the overburdened levee walls to handle. The rising water first surged over the tops of the levee walls, we were to believe, sending the first floodwaters into New Orleans, and then the levee walls themselves ultimately succumbed to the surging waters. And the rest, as they say, is history.

Now, that’s a nice little story. It really is. It’s at least as good, I’d have to say, as any of the other stories cooked up in recent years to explain away unusual events. True, if you really give it some thought – like, say, for thirty seconds or so – then it doesn’t seem to make a lot of sense, but that has never stopped a

wild yarn from becoming a part of the new reality before, so it shouldn't be a problem now.

Once upon a time, in a more innocent era, people might have questioned how it was that storm surges could have caused the breaches in the levees nearly a full day after the storm had hit town. "How can that be?" they might have asked. "The storm came through here on Monday and the levees weren't breached until Tuesday. The wind and rain were pretty well gone by then, so it seems to me like it would have been kind of an odd time for a massive storm surge. And it seems pretty darn peculiar that all five of those breaches – all five of them! – occurred under cover of night some 18-21 hours after Katrina came ashore."

Today, in these much more enlightened times, we would never raise such foolish questions. Instead, we instinctively do what is expected of all refined, cultured men and women of the twenty-first century: we warmly embrace whatever nonsensical lies are thrown our way, and then we go and share those lies with others, only to find that everyone else already knows the same lies, which is okay, as it turns out, because that makes it easier for us to all sit around and discuss current events as though we actually know what we're talking about.

In this particular situation, however, we do not have to blindly accept the first official lie. There are slightly different rules at play here, because this is one of those cases where the official story has been officially repudiated. That official repudiation, however, was a rather coy one, which means that this is a situation where it is okay to believe either the first official lie or the second official lie. Either one will do just fine, just so long as you firmly believe in one of the two. The closest parallel I can think of here concerns the attack on the Pentagon on September 11. Readers will recall that at first it was claimed that the plane and everything in it was vaporized by the intense heat from the resulting fire. Later, however, it was claimed that the passengers were actually recovered and identified through DNA analysis, and that the plane had been largely reconstructed and was sitting in an unidentified aircraft hangar.

Obviously, both stories could not possibly be true, and, in fact, neither one of them was actually true. But that's not the point here. The point here is that it is perfectly okay to be a true believer in either official version of reality. What is not okay is trying to insert your own reality, or, worse yet, a relatively objective reality into the mix. That would be considered a major *faux pas*. The important thing to remember here is that, while you are not limited to a *specific* official reality, you must choose from one of the available official realities. And as I started to say, there is a new official story concerning the breached levees. It goes something like this:

The levee breaches along two major canals that flooded New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina resulted from massive soil failures under concrete storm walls, not from hurricane surges that sent water over the tops of the walls as Army officials initially said, according to teams of investigators who have examined evidence in the last week. The findings appear to chip away at the simple story that the storm surge was much larger and higher than the walls were designed to handle ...

Investigators have found no evidence of such overflow and foundational scouring at the breaches in the London Avenue and 17<sup>th</sup> Street Canals, two main failures behind the central New Orleans flooding. In fact, in one case, water marks are a full 2½ feet below the tops of the walls. (Ralph Vartabedian “Soil Failure, Not Overflow, Cited in Levee Breaches,” Los Angeles Times, October 8, 2005, Page A26)

So it appears that it has now been officially acknowledged that there was no massive storm surge that sent water pouring over the levee walls, on either Monday or Tuesday mornings. Even at the height of the storm, the hurricane’s surges didn’t come close to overflowing the levee walls at either the 17th Street or London Avenue Canals, where water remained "more than two feet below the tops of the walls." (Ralph Vartabedian and Stephen Braun “System Failures Seen in Levees,” Los Angeles Times, October 22, 2005) But then, hours later, when the winds and rain had died down, and relative calm had returned to the waters of Lake Pontchartrain, the soil underneath the levee walls, in multiple locations, spontaneously failed. Along the London Avenue Canal, for example, “a 100-foot-long block of soil, about 15 feet deep, was pushed back 35 feet. As the earth berm shifted, the concrete storm wall on top collapsed into the hole left by the moving soil and disappeared into the water.”

I wonder what could cause that to happen? Why would there be such a tremendous lateral force exerted on the soil underlying the levee walls at that particular time? Is that the norm in the aftermath of a hurricane? I’m no expert in the dynamics of various types of natural disasters, but it seems to me that a phenomenon like that would more likely be the result of an earthquake than a hurricane. Another possibility, I suppose, is that some type of depth charges were responsible for undermining the levees. I’ll bet that the Pentagon has something in its catalogue that would do the trick. But I don’t recall reading any news reports of the levees being deliberately blown, so I guess we have to rule out that possibility.

Luckily, we have an alternative explanation. According to the most recent reports, the soil failures were caused by oak tress and burrowing rodents: "The triggering event in the catastrophic failure of the 17th Street Canal may have been the fall of a large oak tree planted at the base of the levee ... The tree's falling started a chain reaction that took out several hundred feet of flood wall. A similar scenario may have played out on the London Avenue Canal." In addition, "burrowing animals created large tunnels that undermined already weak foundations." Levee board officials, however, openly scoffed at such foolishness, noting that "there were no trees on the levees anywhere," and neither were there large concentrations of burrowing rodents. (Ralph Vartabedian and Stephen Braun “System Failures Seen in Levees,” Los Angeles Times, October 22, 2005)

Since it is pretty obvious that only a crazed 'conspiracy theorist' would buy into the notion that oak trees and rodents caused the massive flooding of New Orleans, let's turn our attention back to the more credible theory that the levees were deliberately breached. And, as it turns out, there were indeed some reports of deliberate flooding, albeit much later in the day Tuesday, many hours after the initial breaches: “authorities took the decision to flood [Crowder Road] district in an apparent attempt to sluice out some of the water that had submerged a neighbouring district ... The authorities had given people in the district until 5pm on Tuesday to get out – after that they would open the floodgates.” ([Jamie Doward “They’re Not Giving Us What We Need To Survive,” The Observer, September 4, 2005](#))

Do levees have floodgates? Gates that, if opened, allow neighborhoods to be flooded? That's a pretty odd feature. I hope they keep them locked, to keep the neighborhood kids from trying to open them. What really happened, I suppose, is that a levee was deliberately breached. But I wonder how they did that? I wonder if they undermined it by blasting away the soil underneath? I'm just curious because that seems to be a pretty effective technique. And it probably makes relatively little noise. But I guess in this case noise wasn't really a factor, since breaching the levee was an officially acknowledged act. No one was trying to hide anything. If you were trying to hide authorship of the breaches though, it might be a good idea to undermine the levee walls rather than just blasting them directly.

Does anyone find it curious, by the way, that the Crowder Road District was deliberately flooded? What was the thought process behind that decision? ... "Well, it looks like we have one neighborhood over here that is pretty well trashed. There's just water everywhere. So I think what we should do – and I've given this a great deal of thought – is try to drain some or all of the water into that neighborhood right over there. That way, we will have two flooded neighborhoods! Actually, truth be told, we're hoping that if we act quickly enough, the first neighborhood can be saved – at the expense, of course, of the second neighborhood. And I'm sure the people in the second neighborhood won't mind because, as a general rule, the black folks around here are always willing to lend a hand to help out the white folks."

The main point of this semi-digression, I suppose, is that as of Tuesday (August 30) evening, actions were being taken to deliberately cause flooding in certain neighborhoods, and no credible explanation was being given for these actions. Perhaps then it is not so unreasonable to ponder whether the initial breaches, all occurring under cover of night, all occurring many hours after the storm had passed through town, and all causing flooding primarily in the poorest sections of the city, were deliberate as well. And perhaps the additional flooding – occurring too long after Katrina's landfall to be credibly attributed to the storm, and so therefore officially, though quietly, acknowledged as a deliberate act – was undertaken to correct a 'problem' with the initial flooding, that problem being that a few of the targeted neighborhoods were spared while a few of the non-targeted neighborhoods were not.

Before moving on from this discussion of the levees, I should probably mention one rather curious incident that occurred in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. I realize, of course, that America is home to the largest, mightiest, 'freest' media machine the world has ever seen, and because of that, there is virtually no scrap of news that escapes the attention of the press corps and the American people. Nevertheless, in the unlikely event that some of you may have missed this story the first time around, I present it to you here in its entirety:

Police shot eight people carrying guns on a New Orleans bridge Sunday, killing five or six, a deputy chief said. A spokesman for the Army Corps of Engineers said the victims were contractors on their way to repair a canal. The contractors were walking across a bridge on their way to launch barges into Lake Pontchartrain to fix the 17<sup>th</sup> Street Canal, said John Hall, a spokesman for the Corps. Earlier Sunday, New Orleans Deputy Police Chief W.J. Riley said police shot eight people, killing five or six. The shootings took place on the Danziger Bridge, which spans a canal connecting Lake Pontchartrain and the Mississippi River. No other details were immediately available. ("Police Kill Five Contractors on LA Bridge," Associated Press, September 4, 2005)

This was, of course, a huge story when it first broke. I mean, how often do groups of armed military personnel and groups of armed police personnel reenact the "gunfight at the OK

Corral” on an American street using live ammunition? This unprecedented event – the gunning down of half-a-dozen military personnel on American soil for merely going about doing their jobs – naturally generated a considerable amount of media attention. Bill O’Reilly alone spent the better part of a week hashing over the ‘talking points’ of the story. To the surprise of everyone, Greta Van Susteren and Nancy Grace even took a break from their relentless search for Natalie Holloway to focus attention on the big story. Oprah had on the wives of the fallen contractors to discuss how they were dealing with their loss. Investigations were quickly launched into the incident by the Army Corps of Engineers, the New Orleans Police Department, the Louisiana Governor's Office, the New Orleans Mayor's Office, the United States Congress, and various other concerned parties.

You all remember all of that ... right? If not, it’s probably because none of it actually happened. Except for the part about the shootout between the Army Corps of Engineers and the New Orleans Police Department. That part really happened. At least, I’m assuming that there was quite a shootout, since one would expect that when armed military personnel are being fired upon, they will generally fire back. But all the rest, I just made up. Kind of like the real media just makes stuff up.

It is difficult to determine, given the scarcity of details available, what really happened. When the two organizations involved are the New Orleans Police Department and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, it’s near impossible to determine who might have been the good guys in this story. Was this a case of corrupt elements of the NOPD thwarting efforts to arrest the flooding of New Orleans? Or was this a case of honest police officers thwarting efforts to further sabotage the levee system? Or was it neither? Was it merely a tragic case of mistaken identity? Possibly so, but the fact that this story was quickly buried suggests otherwise.

Moving on then ...

Much less discussed than the breakdown in the levee system was the unprecedented breakdown in the city’s second line of defense, its imposing system of pumping stations. Given that New Orleans sits below sea level, an effective pumping system is absolutely essential to the city’s survival. Without it, New Orleans would flood every time a decent rain came through town. Luckily then, the city has a pumping system like no other in the world. (“How the Levees Failed,” Discovery Channel, October 9, 2005)

Built in the early 1900s, New Orleans’ pumping system is composed of 23 pumping stations that house a combined 140 pumps. Though nearly a century old, these pumps remain, to this day, the largest and most powerful of their kind in the world. And, since they were built before America became a society that reveres disposability, the pumps are remarkably reliable. Right up until the day that Katrina came ashore, every one of those 140 pumps were fully operational. But that all changed very quickly in the aftermath of the storm, when, for reasons that have never been adequately explained – and never will be, because no one in government or the media will ever bother to ask – the decision was made to shut the system down.

The explanation that was given was that, since the major levee breaches lay between the pumping stations and Lake Pontchartrain, the pumps were serving no purpose other than to circulate the water right back through the breaches. It was not the case, however, that all 23 of the stations were situated in that manner, and yet all of them were apparently shut down. And *all of the stations*, while they were running, were serving at least one crucial function: keeping the pumping stations themselves from being flooded.

Once the pumps were shut down, the stations were promptly, and quite predictably, submerged, thus doing major damage to all of the pumps' electrical components. With one incredibly stupid, or one incredibly malicious act, a system that had performed nearly flawlessly for almost a century was rendered completely inoperable. Before repairs could even be attempted, workers were faced with the uniquely challenging task of pumping out the pumping stations. The damage was so extensive that two weeks after Katrina hit New Orleans, over half of the stations still had no running pumps.

It is difficult to think of a reasonable explanation for why the pumping stations were shut down, just as it is difficult to think of a logical explanation for why at least some neighborhoods were deliberately flooded. It is difficult as well to explain the curious timing of the five major levee breaches, though I suppose that in a world where three steel-framed skyscrapers can spontaneously collapse on a single day, the nearly simultaneous appearance of five major levee breaches, many hours after the supposedly precipitating event, doesn't really require any explanation at all.

## **NEWSLETTER #74**

**October 23, 2005**

***Katrina, Eugenics and 'Peak Oil,' Part II***

***<http://www.davesweb.cncost.com/nwsltr74.html>***

(Continued from [Newsletter #73](#))

At least one fact seems indisputable: neither "incompetence" nor "lack of preparation" can even begin to explain the actions of national, state and local officials in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. It is perfectly obvious that there *was* a planned response, and that plan *was* fully implemented. The confusion over this has apparently arisen due to the erroneous belief that that plan had something to do with rescuing and providing aid and comfort to survivors.

If the problem was just that FEMA had failed to adequately respond to the disaster, then maybe, just maybe, we could write it off as incompetence. Far more difficult to explain away is that FEMA, and/or the Department of Homeland Security, *actively prevented any other individuals or groups from responding*. And we're not talking here about a couple of anomalous incidents. No, we're talking about an undeniable pattern of criminal behavior.

Among numerous other crimes against the people of New Orleans, FEMA declined an offer from the city of Chicago to send "44 Chicago Fire Department rescue and medical personnel and their gear, more than 100 Chicago police officers, 140 Streets and Sanitation, 146 Public Health and 8 Human Services workers, and a fleet of vehicles including 29 trucks, two boats and a mobile clinic." Instead, FEMA asked Chicago to send just a single truck. (["Daley 'Shocked' at Federal Snub of Offers to Help," Chicago Tribune, September 2, 2005](#))

FEMA also refused to allow into New Orleans "up to 500 Florida airboat pilots [who had] volunteered to rescue Hurricane Katrina victims, transport relief workers and ferry supplies." Many of the pilots had "spent thousands of their own dollars stocking their boats and swamp buggies with food, water, medical supplies and fuel." ([Nancy Imperiale "Airboaters Stalled by FEMA," Sun Sentinel, September 2, 2005](#)) Meanwhile, "More than 50 civilian aircraft responding to separate requests for evacuations from hospitals and other agencies swarmed to the area a day after Katrina hit, but FEMA blocked their efforts" as well. ("After 9/11, a Master Plan for Disasters Was Drawn; It Didn't Weather the Storm," Los Angeles Times, September 11, 2005)

Not to be outdone, the Department of Homeland Security refused to allow the Red Cross to deliver food. Said Renita Hosler, spokeswoman for the organization, "The Homeland Security Department has requested and continues to request that the American Red Cross not come back into New Orleans." ([Ann Rodgers "Homeland Security Won't Let Red Cross Deliver Food," Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, September 3, 2005](#))

In other news, FEMA opted to all but ignore an offshore Naval ship, the USS Bataan, that was equipped with a 600-bed hospital, six operating rooms, a 1,200-man crew, helicopters, doctors, food, water, and the ability to desalinate up to 100,000 gallons of drinking water per day. According to a report in the Chicago Tribune, the "role in the relief effort of the sizable medical staff on board the Bataan was not up to the Navy, but to FEMA officials directing the overall effort." ([Stephen J. Hedges "Navy Ship Nearby Underused," Chicago Tribune, September 4, 2005](#)) In a similar vein, FEMA passed on an offer from the University of North Carolina to supply a state-of-the-art mobile hospital. (<http://edition.cnn.com/2005/HEALTH/09/04/katrina.sick.redtape.ap/>)

On September 5, Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA) blasted FEMA in a report carried by London's Financial Times: "Offers of medicine, communications equipment and other desperately needed items continue to flow in, only to be ignored by [FEMA]." Landrieu also criticized FEMA for "dragging its feet" (a rather charitable characterization of FEMA's actions) when Amtrak offered the use of its trains to evacuate victims. (<http://news.ft.com/cms/s/84aa35cc-1da8-11da-b40b-00000e>) On September 6, an Associated Press report carried the following quote from Ben Morris, mayor of Slidell, Louisiana: "We are still hampered by some of the most stupid, idiotic regulations by FEMA. They have turned away generators, we've heard that they've gone around seizing equipment from our contractors." (<http://www.wvlv.com/local/stories/WWLBLOG.ac3fcea.html>)

More than a week after Katrina came ashore, the *Associated Press* reported that "hundreds of firefighters who volunteered to help rescue victims of Hurricane Katrina" had instead been whiling away their time "playing cards, taking classes on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's history and lounging at an Atlanta airport hotel." The FEMA official in charge of the firefighters explained that the agency "wanted to make certain they were sent where the need was greatest." And since FEMA apparently hadn't yet determined where the need was greatest, a week after the need arose, it was best to just let the skilled rescue workers sit idle. ("Eager to Help, Frustrated Firefighters Wait for Orders," *Los Angeles Times*, September 7, 2005, page A26)

Next came a report that a "German military plane carrying 15 tons of military rations for survivors of Hurricane Katrina was sent back by U.S. authorities ... Since Hurricane Katrina struck the United States, many international donors have complained of frustration that bureaucratic entanglements have hindered shipments to the United States." (Claudia Kemmer "German Plane with 15 Tons of Aid Turned Back From U.S.," *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, September 10, 2005) And then came one of the most appalling stories of all, courtesy of The Advocate: "In the midst of administering chest compressions to a dying woman several days after Hurricane Katrina struck, Dr. Mark N. Perlmutter was ordered to stop by a federal official because he wasn't registered with the



Federal Emergency Management Agency. 'I begged him to let me continue,' said Perlmutter, who left his home and practice as an orthopedic surgeon in Pennsylvania to come to Louisiana and volunteer to care for hurricane victims. 'People were dying, and I was the only doctor on the tarmac (at the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport) where scores of nonresponsive patients lay on stretchers. Two patients died in front of me.' ... FEMA issued a formal response to Perlmutter's story, acknowledging that the agency does not use voluntary physicians." (Laurie Smith Anderson "Doctor Says FEMA Ordered Him to Stop Treating Hurricane Victims," The Advocate, September 16, 2005)

By September 11, Jefferson Parish officials had all but declared war on FEMA. As the Times-Picayune reported, "Jefferson Parish Sheriff Harry Lee said he has 'commandered' [sic] the Sam's and Wal-Mart stores in the parish and ordered them to open as soon as possible. Lee said he took the action after he learned that a Wal-Mart store wanted to open recently but was told by FEMA officials that it could not ... Lee said anyone from FEMA who tries to close either store will be arrested by deputies." In making the announcement, Sheriff Lee noted that he had the backing of Aaron Broussard, the president of Jefferson Parish. Several days earlier, on "Meet the Press," Broussard had angrily revealed some ugly truths about FEMA: "... the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina will go down as one of the worst abandonments of Americans on American soil ever in U.S. history ... Bureaucracy has committed murder here in the greater New Orleans area, and bureaucracy has to stand trial before Congress now ... Let me give you just three quick examples. We had Wal-Mart deliver three trucks of water, trailer trucks of water. FEMA turned them back. They said we didn't need them. This was a week ago. FEMA – we had 1,000 gallons of diesel fuel on a Coast Guard vessel docked in my Parish. The Coast Guard said, 'Come get the fuel right away.' When we got there with our trucks, they got a word. 'FEMA says don't give you the fuel.' Yesterday – yesterday – FEMA comes in and cuts all of our emergency communication lines. They cut them without notice. Our sheriff, Harry Lee, goes back in, he reconnects the line. He posts armed guards on our line and says, 'No one is getting near these lines.'" (<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/9179790/>; see also [Scott Shane "Storm and Crisis: The Fallout," New York Times, September 5, 2005](#))

The Loudoun Times-Mirror provided yet another example of the 'assistance' that FEMA provided to Jefferson Parish: "Loudoun Sheriff's deputies and emergency personnel were on their way to hurricane-stricken Louisiana Thursday night but had to turn around when the federal government failed to come up with the required paperwork. Sheriff Steve Simpson and his staff spent 12 hours trying to get the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the state of Louisiana Emergency Operations Center to act. They didn't, and the 20 deputies and six emergency medical technicians – all volunteers – turned around and came back to Loudoun ... The deputies [had] packed up to head south after a request from the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Department ... The relief team had gathered enough supplies to be self-sufficient for up to 14 days." (Shannon Sollinger "Loudon Relief Crew Turned Away," Loudon Times-Mirror, September 2, 2005)

Did I mention, by the way, that Jefferson Parish is (or at least was) populated primarily with African-Americans? Or had you already figured that out on your own? And did I also mention that what this country could really use is a whole lot more Aaron Broussards and Harry Lees?

To make sure that everyone got FEMA's message loud and clear, the agency issued a press release, available on their website, urging "First Responders" *not to respond* unless officially dispatched – which really meant, "don't call us, we'll call you ... but not anytime soon."

(<http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=18470>) The truth of the matter is that many of the human and material resources needed to deal with the tragedy in New Orleans were readily available – trained rescue teams, skilled medical personnel, medical supplies, medical facilities, food, water, and all manner of transportation – and virtually all of it was offered free of charge. The American people, along with (though I hate to admit it) portions of corporate America, and with the backing of the international community, were poised to spontaneously mount an effective response to this disaster. If the government, particularly the federal government, had simply done nothing, then much of the death and suffering could have been avoided. Unfortunately, that is not what happened. Instead, FEMA worked to actively thwart all voluntary efforts to help the victims, thereby ensuring that not only would there be no federal response, *there would be no response at all*.

Such a deliberate course of actions cannot credibly be explained away as mere 'incompetence.' Neither can the punishing of two Naval pilots (Lt. Matt Udkow and Lt. Michael Holdener) for committing the apparently unpardonable sin of rescuing more than 100 hurricane victims "before returning to base from a cargo delivery." Their actions, you see, allegedly compromised the delivery of relief supplies, even though the Navy admitted that "no supplies went undelivered as a result of the rescues." A senior official claimed that the pilots were merely 'counseled,' not punished, but it was acknowledged that one of the men "was temporarily assigned to a kennel." I guess those years of training as a pilot come in handy when it comes time to clean the shit out of the cages at the kennel. ("Navy Pilots Are 'Counseled' After Unauthorized Rescues," *Los Angeles Times*, September 8, 2005, Page A26)

As most of us probably recall, the blocking of relief efforts was largely justified with claims that conditions in the city were simply too dangerous due to the rampant criminality that was inexplicably sweeping over New Orleans. Heavily-armed gangs had taken control of the ravished streets and were openly attacking both residents and stranded tourists. Looters were shamelessly exploiting the tragedy to stock up on flat-screen TVs. Murderers and, worse yet, baby-rapists lurked around every corner. Snipers had taken up strategic positions throughout the city, taking pot-shots at anyone who dared attempt come to the aid of hurricane victims. The only thing missing, it seemed, were reports of roving bands of Islamic terrorists, possibly 'sleeper' Al Qaeda cells. I'm kind of surprised, to be honest, that Karl Rove didn't think of tossing that into the mix.

In a truly shocking development, nearly all of those stories have turned out to be works of fiction – works of fiction that were fed to a media machine that dutifully reported them as fact ... over and over and over again. Remarkably enough, various avenues of that media machine have now admitted, rather quietly, that the sensational stories of rampant criminality were fabrications. Even without the admission, however, most of the stories were fairly obvious fabrications. For the record, the facts appear to be as follows:

- 1) There is no evidence that there was any "looting" of any significance occurring in post-Katrina New Orleans. Doing what is necessary, in times of crisis, to minimally provide for the needs of yourself and your family, is not "looting." And there is little indication that many residents took time from their busy schedules to swim over to the local Circuit City to pick up a new plasma TV. What would they have done with this loot once it was acquired? Take it back to their submerged homes? Lug it to the Superdome? ... "Honey, it looks like we're going to have to leave one of the kids here on the roof or I won't be able to carry the new flatty."

A month after Katrina hit New Orleans, the Acting Supt. of the New Orleans Police Department, Warren Riley, acknowledged that procuring items needed for survival in a crisis situation was not "looting." According to Riley, "[people] did actually go in and get jeans, get food in some locations. [They] were without food for some days. Those things are acceptable; they're acceptable to me."

Oh ... wait a minute ... my bad. I seem to have misread Riley's statement. What he actually said was "*our officers* did actually go in and get jeans, get food in some locations. We were without food for some days. Those things are acceptable; they're acceptable to me." So is, I suppose, the fact that "officers also commandeered Cadillacs from a car dealership." Riley's position would appear to be somewhat at odds, however, with the official position at the time the alleged looting was taking place, when there was much talk of a "zero tolerance" policy that called for 'looters' to be "shot on sight." ([Nicole Gaouette "New Orleans Police Investigate Possible Looting by Officers," Los Angeles Times, September 30, 2005](#))

- 2) It is extremely unlikely that there were violent gangs prowling the flooded streets of New Orleans. I know it's hard for some people to believe, but 'gang bangers' are human too. They have families and friends. And sometimes taking care of the needs of their loved ones actually takes precedence over gang rivalries and turf wars. If Indians and Pakistanis can temporarily put aside their differences in the wake of an earthquake, then I am reasonably certain that rival street gangs can do likewise in the wake of a hurricane. And if you think about it, it would be pretty hard to do a drive-by shooting in a makeshift rowboat.
- 3) There is no evidence indicating that there were civilian 'snipers' impeding the work of relief workers. Snipers have never, as far as I can determine, spontaneously appeared in the aftermath of a natural disaster. If there were any snipers at all, they were military/intelligence operatives sent in to provide a handy pretext for mounting a military response.

On September 27, the *Los Angeles Times* (along with several other newspapers) quietly admitted that the lurid stories of rampant criminality were entirely unsupported by any actual evidence: "newspapers and television exaggerated criminal behavior in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, particularly at the overcrowded Superdome and Convention Center ... unverified 'rapes,' and unconfirmed sniper attacks [were] among examples of scores of myths about the dome and Convention Center treated as fact ... Follow-up reporting has discredited reports of a 7-year-old being raped and murdered at the Superdome [and] roving bands of armed gang members attacking the helpless." ([Susannah Rosenblatt and James Rainey "Katrina Takes a Toll on Truth, News Accuracy," Los Angeles Times, September 27, 2005](#))

Since the *L.A. Times* has long been tasked with pretending to be a 'liberal' publication, the Rosenblatt and Rainey report took aim at the 'Fair and Balanced' reporting of *Fox News*: "Fox News, a day before the major evacuation of the Superdome began, issued an 'alert' as talk show host Alan Colmes reiterated reports of 'robberies, rapes, carjackings, riots and murder. Violent gangs are roaming the streets at night, hidden by the cover of darkness.'"

Colmes' little rant was pure bullshit, of course, but in all fairness to *Fox News*, so was just about everything that was being reported by every other avenue of the media, including the *Los Angeles Times*, which splashed lurid lies across its front page for days. The feeble

attempt to correct those lies, on the other hand, was buried in a single story that went largely unread -- which is why the majority of Americans still believe, and will always believe, that the only people to ride out the storm in New Orleans were looters, murderers, rapists, snipers, robbers, carjackers and rioters.

It was not by accident, by the way, that Alan Colmes – the token 'liberal' hired by *Fox News* after an exhaustive, nationwide search for the least credible fake-liberal in the country – was among those leading the charge to spread such viscous lies about people who would, in any civilized society, have been recognized as victims, not criminals. The goal of this propaganda campaign, you see, was to justify a massive military response – to justify placing a swath of the Gulf Coast under martial law. And when you're trying to sell an authoritarian, ultra-right-wing agenda, the favored strategy is to use salesman who appear to be from the political left. And when the agenda includes a little ethnic cleansing, it helps if the salesmen are from the targeted ethnic group, hence the prominent involvement of purported 'liberals' like Oprah Winfrey and New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin.

The *L.A. Times* report placed blame for the “inaccurate reporting in large measure on the breakdown of telephone service, which prevented dissemination of accurate reports to those most in need of the information.” I have to assume here that the *Times*’ stellar “follow-up reporting” failed to uncover the fact that there probably would have been substantially better telephone service if FEMA hadn’t been running around deliberately cutting communication lines. The cutting of those lines no doubt greatly facilitated the control of information, ensuring that the stories coming out of New Orleans were largely the stories that the government wanted told. Like, for instance, the fictional stories of snipers and armed gangs running amok in the city.

Curiously missing from the *L.A. Times* report was any questioning of the overtly military federal response to the tragedy. After openly, though rather shyly, acknowledging that the pretext for turning New Orleans into a war zone was wholly fabricated, the *Times* offered not one word of criticism of the Bush administration's decision to send heavily armed troops into an American city on what was explicitly described as a "combat mission" to pacify "insurgents." Such an omission, from one of the alleged pillars of the 'liberal' media, would be shocking were it not for the fact that the very same *L.A. Times* long ago tacitly acknowledged that all of the justifications for turning the nation of Iraq into a war zone were lies, and yet still steadfastly cheerleads the war.

Also missing was any criticism of the widely-publicized decision to pull all NOPD officers off rescue and relief operations so that the department could focus all its resources on addressing the largely mythical crime wave sweeping the city. If any organization was in a position to judge the veracity of the lurid stories circulating in the press, it was the New Orleans Police Department, which had hundreds of pairs of eyes and ears on the streets of the city. Why then was the decision made to reallocate police resources? Was this yet another action taken by FEMA officials, working behind the scenes, to insure that no relief was available to hurricane survivors, and that the only responses to the tragedy would be armed responses?

Though not commented on by the media, the unjustifiable decision by the NOPD to suspend all rescue operations was rather remarkable, for it revealed, if only for a brief moment, the true nature of the beast. One of the Golden Rules of the Western corporate capitalist system stood naked for all to see, but few paid any attention. If they had, and if they had listened

closely enough, this is what they would have heard: “Property has value; human life does not.”

The other justification that was bandied about for preventing relief workers and supplies from getting to the victims was that the water covering the city had immediately transformed itself into a toxic stew so vile that it posed a grave threat to life as we know it. Not so toxic, of course, as to negatively impact the legions of hungry alligators (or crocodiles; I don’t remember, or care, which it was) prowling the city, or the schools of ravenous piranha, or, in at least one neighborhood, the Loch Ness Monster, but dangerously toxic nonetheless. Unfortunately, it appears as though those stories might have been over-hyped just a bit as well. Returning again to page A26 of the *Los Angeles Times* (where they hide all the good Katrina stories, just to see if anyone is paying attention), we find this from October 2:

Fish from Lake Pontchartrain, the source of much of New Orleans’ famous seafood, is safe to eat again after Hurricane Katrina ... Fetid floodwaters that filled 80% of New Orleans after Katrina struck on Aug. 29 were pumped into Lake Pontchartrain, but they turned out to be less polluted than had been feared. (“Pontchartrain Fish Are Declared Safe to Eat,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 2, 2005, Page A26)

According to Chris Piehler of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, “There is no toxic soup.” Wow! That’s weird, isn’t it? Just the other day, when the water was in the streets of New Orleans, it was highly toxic, but now that it is back in the lake, it seems to be okay. What a difference a few weeks makes! It seems like only yesterday that New Orleans was, by all reports, both a literal and metaphorical cesspool. But now we know that that was all just a, uhmm, misunderstanding. Certainly no one is suggesting any malice here. We are all adults and we all know that the price we have to pay for having a ‘free press’ is that sometimes every single media outlet in the country – in print, on television and on the radio – mistakenly spend several days loudly and repeatedly broadcasting the same made-up stories.

Let’s assume, for the sake of argument – and because you wouldn’t be visiting this website if you weren’t seeking out ‘conspiracy theories’ – that everything that happened in post-Katrina New Orleans happened because powerful actors wanted it to happen: the breaching of the levees, the flooding of selected portions of the city, the suppression of any and all relief efforts, the establishment of a pretext for a military response through the introduction of fraudulent ‘news’ stories, and the relocation by force of the residents of New Orleans. What then would be the motivation for these actions? I can think of at least three motives:

1. To acclimate the American people to the presence of armed troops on American soil, which will soon be a familiar sight not just in southern Louisiana, but throughout the country. Even as you read this, the White House and Congress are hard at work drafting legislation and executive orders that will normalize the use of combat personnel to deal with any contrived situation.
2. To allow the city of New Orleans to be rebuilt and refashioned into what our fearless leaders no doubt see as a city of the future – a city that is much richer, and much whiter, than the city that stood before.
3. To solidify control over the Gulf Coast oil and gas industry, since a key goal of the perpetrators of the ‘Peak Oil’ charade, as I’ve noted before, is to achieve total control over all the world’s major oil and gas taps.

Speaking of 'Peak Oil,' my mailbox runneth over with inquiries concerning the scam. I suppose that is because the issue is getting a little hard to ignore, what with it popping up all over the mainstream media these days. I know this because I subscribe to only a handful of mainstream publications and every one of them have now promoted the 'Peak' lies. The cover of the August edition of *National Geographic*, for instance, reads: "After Oil; Powering the Future." The cover of October's *Esquire* reads, charmingly enough: "The End of Oil (& Life As We Know It); A Handy Guide."

Yes, friends, thanks to the tireless efforts of Mike Ruppert and company, the mainstream media have now been forced to acknowledge the 'reality' of 'Peak Oil.' That is, after all, the way that things generally work -- the truth first emerges in the fringes of the 'alternative' media, and then, within a few short years, through the hard and thankless work of dedicated researchers, some of whom might not even come from CIA families, their ideas gain mainstream acceptance. That is precisely why mainstream commentators and publications are now okay with, for example, spilling the beans on 9-11. And the sham election of 2000. And 2002. And 2004. And the war crimes being committed in Iraq and Afghanistan. And the rampant criminality of the Bush regime, on both the domestic and international fronts. And Paul Wellstone's plane 'crash.' And (insert the scandal of your choice here; I'm bored with it already).

Maybe we don't even need an 'alternative' media. We can just wait a couple of years for the real stories to seep into the mainstream. True, we'll always be lagging a little behind, but I'm the kind of guy who always waits for movies to come out on DVD before seeing them, so I'm kind of used to lagging a little behind. And to be perfectly honest, I usually feel ripped-off even at the DVD rental price, although that really has nothing to do with the current discussion.

By the way, since the Peakers in the 'alternative' media insist on taking credit for every 'Peak' story that appears in the mainstream, then I suppose that I will have to take full credit for an article by Sonia Shaw entitled "The Strange Heresies of Thomas Gold," appearing in the November issue of *Playboy*. Shaw's piece makes for interesting reading, particularly the discussion of how research that has supported Gold's theories on oil has never been published. But here I digress yet again.

What I really wanted to talk about was when I offended the 'Peak Oil' crowd by reporting that their real agenda was selling the necessity of a massive 'population reduction.' Remember that? Remember how all the Peakers got their panties in a wad and accused me of putting words in the mouth of their great and fearless cult leader, The Honorable Michael Ruppert? And remember how they nearly went into convulsions when I described their 'solution' to the alleged problem as a eugenics program, because, of course, no one in the 'Peak' movement advocated any such thing?

Well ... it appears that it is time to revisit that issue, even at the considerable risk of further offending the delicate sensibilities of the craven 'Peak Oil' proponents. This time, however, I won't be putting words in anyone's mouth. No, this time I will be quoting directly from a newsletter penned by the great Colin Campbell\*, founding father of ASPO (Association for the Study of Peak Oil) and guiding light of folks like Ruppert, Heinberg and Pfeiffer. Without



further ado then, let's hear what Dr. Campbell had to say this past July (with my own comments added in **red**, and with a shout-out to [Ty Brown](#) for directing my attention to this post):

Recent articles in the ASPO Newsletter have agreed that the explosion of world population from about 0.6 billion in 1750 to 6.4 billion today was initiated and sustained by the shift from renewable energy to fossil fuel (**sic**) energy in the Industrial Revolution. There is agreement that the progressive exhaustion of fossil fuel reserves will reverse the process, though there is uncertainty as to what a sustainable global population would be.

... a global population reduction of some 6 billion people is likely to take place during the 21st Century (**For the mathematically impaired, Campbell is talking about no less than a 94% reduction in the world's population. If you feel that you and all of your loved ones are among the lucky 6% who will be spared, then I suppose there is no cause for alarm and you can feel free to stop reading now.**)

... probably before 2010 ... uncontrollable inflation and recession will spread round the world ... (**Probably so, but this will be, of course, a deliberately induced condition.**)

In Third World nations ... a Darwinian struggle for shrinking resources of all kinds will be in full swing ... the imperative to survive will be driving strong groups to take what they want from weak ones. The concept of human rights will be irrelevant ...

It may well be that, in the West, the same argument will affect the thinking of militarily powerful nations ... Instantaneous nuclear elimination of population centres might even be considered merciful, compared to starvation and massacres prolonged over decades. (**You have to applaud Campbell's effort here; I doubt that even Orwell could have conceived of the concept of a humanitarian nuclear holocaust.**) Eventually, probably before 2150, world population will have fallen to a level that renewable energy, mainly biomass, can sustain ...

Probably the greatest obstacle to the scenario with the best chance of success (in my opinion) is the Western world's unintelligent devotion to political correctness, human rights and the sanctity of human life. In the Darwinian world that preceded and will follow the fossil fuel era, these concepts were and will be meaningless. Survival in a Darwinian resource-poor world depends on the ruthless elimination of rivals, not the acquisition of moral kudos by cherishing them when they are weak. (**Hmmm ... overt calls for the destruction of the weak by the strong? ... now, where have I heard that before? ... Adolf Hitler? Aleister Crowley? I can't quite place it ...**)

So the population reduction scenario with the best chance of success has to be Darwinian in all its aspects, with none of the sentimentality that

shrouded the second half of the 20th Century in a dense fog of political correctness ...

To those sentimentalists who ... are outraged at the proposed replacement of human rights by cold logic, I would say “You have had your day, in which your woolly thinking has messed up not just the Western world but the whole planet, which could, if Homo sapiens had been truly intelligent, have supported a small population enjoying a wonderful quality of life almost for ever. You have thrown away that opportunity.”

... The scenario is: Immigration is banned. Unauthorised arrives are treated as criminals. Every woman is entitled to raise one healthy child. No religious or cultural exceptions can be made, but entitlements can be traded. Abortion or infanticide is compulsory if the fetus or baby proves to be handicapped (Darwinian selection weeds out the unfit). When, through old age, accident or disease, an individual becomes more of a burden than a benefit to society, his or her life is humanely ended. Voluntary euthanasia is legal and made easy. Imprisonment is rare, replaced by corporal punishment for lesser offences and painless capital punishment for greater.

... The punishment regime would improve social cohesiveness by weeding out criminal elements.

... military forces should be maintained strong and alert ... Collaboration with other nations practising the same population reduction scenario would be of great mutual advantage.  
(<http://www.peakoil.ie/newsletters/588>)

I have to admit that Campbell did not once, throughout his entire rant, use the word "eugenics." But what he has described here - the destruction of the "weak," the "unfit," the sick and the elderly, the "handicapped," the "burdens" to society, and, of course, the "criminal elements" - is nothing short of a eugenicist's wet dream. The frequent references to Darwin, I have to say, are a nice touch as well.

I would hope that I don't have to point out here that it will be the all-powerful state that will decide who is a "burden" and who is a "benefit" to society, and who is "unfit," and what is and what isn't a "handicap," and who is too old, injured or diseased to go on, and what crimes are punishable by death. The good news, of course, is that the wealthy will be able to produce as many children as they desire, since the rest of us will likely be forced to barter away the only thing we will have left that will be of any value: our child "entitlement."

Some of you are no doubt wondering what sort of complex formulas will be used to determine who stays and who goes when the Great Die-Off rolls through town. It's not really as mysterious as it seems. Basically, it will work something like this: you know how in virtually every country on the planet there is a very small percentage of the people – usually around five or six



percent – who seem to control the overwhelming majority of that country's wealth? Those will be the 'keepers.' And everyone else? Well, maybe you better sit down, because I have some bad news for you ...

I should probably point out here that when Campbell speaks of "weeding out criminal elements," he is really rather coyly referring to people that happen to have more pigment in their skin than he does. We know this because former Education Secretary and 'Drug Czar' William Bennett, who apparently gets his 'talking points' from the same folks as Colin Campbell, spelled it out pretty clearly on his radio show recently:

I do know that it's true that if you wanted to reduce crime, you could – if that were your sole purpose – you could abort every black baby in this country, and your crime rate would go down. That would be an impossibly ridiculous and morally reprehensible thing to do, but your crime rate would go down.

It's hard to say what is more remarkable about that statement – that someone with a relatively prominent voice in the media can casually discuss genocide without stirring up a firestorm of protest, or that someone from the religious right who is not averse to equating abortion with murder could nevertheless tacitly endorse forced abortion on a grand scale, so long as the program is targeting a 'criminal race.'

The bleating of Campbell and Bennett, and the actions taken in New Orleans, are not unrelated events. To conclude otherwise would be rather foolish. What we saw in New Orleans was a glimpse into the near future. And it was likely a relatively tame glimpse at that. An overtly military form of rule, ethnic cleansing, population reduction, the restructuring and rebuilding of major population centers, total control of vital resources, and the craven exploitation of disasters, both natural and unnatural – all of this and more is just around the corner.

Perhaps you are thinking that this type of future is not for you. You'd really prefer something a little different. That's unfortunate, because the future holds very few options. Here's Campbell again, concluding his mini version of Mein Kampf:

Another problem is likely to be the residual opposition to population reduction from sentimentalists and/or religious extremists unable to understand that the days of plenty, when criminals and the weak could be cherished at public expense, are over. Acts of violent protest, such as are carried out today by animal rights activists and anti-abortionists, would, in the Darwinian world, attract capital punishment. Population reduction must be single-minded to succeed.

So it appears as though those who fight back against the agenda will likely be summarily executed, while those who passively go with the flow stand about a 95% chance of being killed off anyway. With odds like that, I would think that fighting back might be a good idea. By any means available. And sooner rather than later.

\* Several readers have written to inform me that the ASPO post quoted in Newsletter #74 was actually penned by someone named William Stanton, not Colin Campbell. Authorship of the piece was rather ambiguous in the post that I read and linked to, but I nevertheless apologize for the error. However, as editor of the newsletter and head honcho of the ASPO organization, it is Campbell who is ultimately accountable for the rants that appear under his organization's banner. And I have been informed that numerous people have appealed to Campbell to disown the post and he has refused to drop his tacit backing for the ideas expressed therein. I'm glad we cleared that up.

# the Center for an Informed America

## NEWSLETTER #78

February 25, 2006

### *Cheney's Got a Gun*

<http://www.davesweb.cnchost.com/nwsltr78.html>

♪                    Cheney's                    got                    a                    gun                    ♪  
♪                    Cheney's                    got                    a                    gun                    ♪  
♪                    Harry's                    face                    has                    come                    undone                    ♪  
♪                    How's                    Karl                    gonna                    spin                    this                    one?                    ♪  
♪                    What                    would                    Kate                    Armstrong                    do                    ♪  
♪ If Cheney popped a cap in you? ♪

(I realize that this story is now old news, because when the Vice President of the United States shoots someone in the face from close range with a shotgun, it's only newsworthy for a few days at best. Even so, I didn't want to be the only irresponsible journalist in the country to fail to weigh in on this non-story.)

While I have never hunted live prey, I have, on one occasion many, many years ago, tried my hand at skeet shooting, which is similar to quail or pheasant hunting, but with inanimate targets. As best I can remember, I managed to make it through that day without shooting anyone in the face – and without actually breaking any clay targets. The latter may have been at least partially due to the fact that I was barely as tall as the gun was long. The photo below, by the way, was snapped just a split-second before the gun's recoil landed me squarely on my ass, eliciting howls of laughter from various family members. And yes, in case you're wondering, that is what all the cool kids were wearing that year.



Since I'm not much of a quail hunter myself, I decided to consult with some seasoned hunters to determine if a quail was in fact a bird, and if that was the case, if said birds weren't normally shot while in flight. They quickly confirmed my suspicions. The normal procedure, according to my resident experts, is to flush out the prey and then shoot at the elusive birds as they attempt to fly away. This will be important later on in our tale, but first let's have a look at the official story of the Cheney 'hunting accident.'

That story, which at first placed the blame for the shooting squarely on the victim - because this administration is, lest we forget, all about personal responsibility - holds that Harry Whittington came up behind Cheney unannounced and that Cheney then turned to take a shot at a fleeing bird and, as we all now know, blasted Whittington in the face and chest, causing an injury that - according to the White House and various media talking-heads - is roughly equivalent to stubbing one's toe.

Now, no one is suggesting that Cheney did anything wrong here, or that this was anything other than an obviously accidental shooting. At least, no one in the media is suggesting any such thing, even though no one in law enforcement or the media has bothered to conduct any sort of a real investigation to verify the

official version of events, and even though the official story is laced with very obvious lies and inconsistencies. It is a foregone conclusion, in this case, that taking such rudimentary steps as visiting the scene of the shooting, examining and testing the firearm used, or questioning witnesses (including the shooter and the victim) as soon as possible after the incident occurred, would just be a waste of everyone's time.

In this country, in case you haven't heard, we are all about "The Rule of Law." And The Rule of Law clearly states (*Article 7; Paragraph 12*): "No investigation shall be necessary when a man occupying one of the highest elected offices in the land shoots another man in the face with a shotgun under questionable circumstances, but a lengthy and costly investigation followed by Articles of Impeachment shall be mandated if someone occupying such an office receives a blowjob from an intern (though other, far more serious crimes committed by said blowjob recipient shall be ignored)." *Paragraph 14* goes on to say that "Anyone suggesting that an investigation is in order shall receive a public flogging; if such suggestions persist, repeat offenders shall, under provisions of the USA Patriot Act, be subject to immediate arrest and imprisonment as suspected terrorists."

Though not readily acknowledged, The Rule of Law also states the following (*Article 9; Paragraph 7*): "Those dedicated public officials engaged in the noble pursuit of drafting and passing laws to regulate the behavior of the masses shall, at all times, be held above the law, while mere mortals shall be subject to warrantless searches, illegal surveillance, indefinite detentions without access to legal counsel, extra-judicial torture, and, at times, such as when attempting to de-board a plane in the state of Florida, summary execution."

So clearly Mr. Cheney was in no way criminally negligent in shooting Mr. Whittington, regardless of the circumstances. If it had been a commoner doing the shooting, then things would be different. When my brother was shot in the face, for example (and yes, this is a true story), the working assumption among law enforcement officials was that a crime had been committed. Upon my brother's admission to the emergency room of the local hospital, the police were immediately contacted, as standard operating procedures dictated. Said officers arrived promptly to question the victim, and then subsequently detained and questioned the shooter. No charges were ultimately filed in the case, since it was, in fact, clearly an accidental shooting. *But it was investigated as a potential crime*, despite the fact that both the shooter and the victim were minors, the weapon involved was a pellet/BB gun (a real BB gun that is, as opposed to a shotgun disingenuously described as a BB gun), the wound was superficial, and the incident took place some thirty years ago, when the laws of the land were decidedly less Draconian than they are today.

The reality is that all gunshot wounds not inflicted by the Vice President of the United States are, as a general rule of thumb, treated as potential crimes, *until proven otherwise*. But as previously mentioned, The Rule of Law dictates that completely different rules apply here. Even so, it might be instructive to conduct a sort of citizen's investigation of the shooting – or at least of the official, apparently hastily constructed, story of the shooting.

The first thing that we can conclude is that all of the key sources of information on the shooting are lying their asses off. For example, the owner of the ranch, Katharine Armstrong, has repeatedly presented herself as an eyewitness to the shooting, despite the fact that her initial statements clearly indicated that she had not seen a thing. Since that fact seems to have slipped down the memory hole, readers are reminded that Armstrong initially claimed that when she saw Cheney's security personnel rush toward the scene of the crime, "The first thing that crossed my mind was he [Cheney] had a heart problem." According to her own account, Armstrong was in a vehicle some 100 yards away when the shot was fired.

It goes without saying that if Armstrong had in fact witnessed the shooting, she would certainly have known the reason for the emergency response, and hence we can safely conclude that she has misrepresented her status as a witness. Nevertheless, Cheney himself, during his friendly little chat with Brit Hume of the White House News Network, repeatedly identified Armstrong as not just *an* eyewitness, but as *the authoritative eyewitness* to the incident. On no less than four occasions during the brief 'interview,' Cheney held Armstrong up as an unassailable eyewitness:

"I thought [it] made good sense [for Armstrong to put out the story] for several reasons. First of all, she was an eyewitness. She'd seen the whole thing."

"[W]e were confident that Katherine was the right one, especially because she was an eyewitness and she could speak authoritatively on it. She probably knew better than I did what had happened ..."

"We had - she's the one who put out the statement. And she was the most credible one to do it because she was a witness."

"I think Katherine was an excellent choice. I don't know who you could get better as the basic source for the story than the witness who saw the whole thing."

(<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/02/print/20060215-3.html>)

It would appear then that the *only* person other than Cheney who has thus far publicly offered an account of how the shooting took place didn't actually witness the event. That is not to say, however, that Ms. Armstrong is not qualified to serve as the administration's spokeswoman for this affair. As Cheney noted, "The Armstrongs have been friends for over 30 years," and "Karl [Rove] has hunted at the Armstrong as well, and we're both good friends of the Armstrongs and of Katharine Armstrong." According to the New York Times, Armstrong is also "a lobbyist for Parsons, an engineering and construction firm that has done extensive work in Iraq." (Anne E. Kornblut and Ralph Blumenthal "No End to Questions in Cheney Hunting Accident," New York Times, February 14, 2006)

Since Armstrong, by her own initial account, didn't actually witness the shooting, and since she is a longtime friend of both Dick Cheney and Karl Rove, the only logical conclusion that can be reached here is that the story that Armstrong put out is the one that was spoon-fed to her by Cheney and Karl Rove, who Cheney acknowledged "did talk with Katherine Armstrong." According to the New York Times:

In the end, White House officials said Mr. Bush learned about the shooting accident at 7:30 p.m. Eastern time, about an hour after it happened, in a call from Andrew H. Card Jr., his chief of staff. But Mr. Bush did not find out that Mr. Cheney fired the shot until about half an hour later in a subsequent call from Karl Rove, his senior adviser and deputy chief of staff, who had called Ms. Armstrong to ask about the incident. (Anne E. Kornblut and Ralph Blumenthal "No End to Questions in Cheney Hunting Accident," New York Times, February 14, 2006)

In other words, by 8:00 PM Eastern time, or 7:00 PM Texas time – at the very latest – the Bush Administration's premier spin doctor and damage-control specialist had already been on the phone with Armstrong, gathering the information he would need to weave the official fable. According to Cheney's account, after tending to Whittington and sending him off to the hospital, the hunting party "loaded up and went back to ranch headquarters, basically. By then, *it's about 7:00 p.m. at night.*" So what we find is that, before the hunting party even made it back to the house, Rove was already hard at work writing the official script – nearly a full day before that script was released to the national media. And the script that he ultimately provided to Armstrong was, not surprisingly, filled with the lies, misrepresentations, and blame-shifting that are Karl Rove's trademarks.

The severity of Whittington's wounds, for example, was downplayed to the point of absurdity. Armstrong's depiction, delivered with a chuckle, was that Whittington had merely been "peppered pretty good," and that "his pride was hurt more than anything else." Armstrong even went so far as to boldly claim that she had been "peppered pretty well myself" on at least one occasion, the implication being that it is a common occupational hazard that all hunters must deal with "from time to time." Just as figure skaters know that they will occasionally make painful contact with an unyielding sheet of ice, hunters know that they will occasionally be blasted in the face with a shotgun. It just goes with the territory. Nothing to really be concerned about.

Armstrong also lied about Whittington's overall condition in the immediate aftermath of the shooting. Her 'eyewitness' account held that Whittington was alert and communicating with Cheney and others tending to him ("It knocked him silly, but he was fine. He was talking. His eyes were open."). But Cheney himself later acknowledged that Whittington was unresponsive, in a state of shock, and had only one eye open.

Armstrong isn't, by any stretch of the imagination, the only liar in this sordid affair. Cheney, as we have already seen, repeatedly lied about Armstrong's status as an 'eyewitness' to the shooting. Curiously enough, he did at least acknowledge his own status as a known liar – only so that he could then use it to justify his failure to notify the media. "Well, who was going to do that?" asked Cheney, in response to a question from Hume concerning his failure to do so. "Are they going to take my word for it? There is obviously..."

Since Cheney didn't finish that thought, allow me to do it for him: "There is obviously a credibility issue here." Indeed, Cheney seems to be such a pathological liar that he can't even decide on how long he has been a hunting enthusiast. He told buddy Brit that he has been a seasoned hunter "for the last

12, 15 years," and then later, in the very same interview, claimed that hunting is "part of my heritage, growing up in Wyoming. It's part of who I am."

In addition to Cheney lying about Armstrong's status as an eyewitness, and Armstrong lying about both the source of her story and the details of the shooting, the doctors tending to Mr. Whittington have consistently lied as well – primarily about their patient's condition. Only in bits and pieces have we learned that, far from being "bruised more than bloodied," as Armstrong claimed, Whittington was "bleeding profusely" from his wounds – to such an extent that his daughter noted that her father "didn't know at the time if he was going to the hospital or the mortuary." Only over time have we learned that the pellets plowed deeply into Whittington's flesh, penetrating at least two vital organs (his heart and his liver), and that, even now, as many as 200 pieces of shot remain embedded in Whittington's face, neck, shoulder and chest.

During the brief few days that the media paid attention to this story, reports of Whittington's condition remained unrelentingly upbeat, though common sense dictated that a 78-year-old man pumped full of birdshot probably wasn't (and still isn't) doing as well as we have been led to believe. Of course, prior to Whittington's brief, tightly choreographed media appearance, no one in the media seemed to make any effort to talk with him, despite the fact that he was allegedly in good spirits and able to regularly receive visitors while fielding phone calls from Cheney. Needless to say, no one has talked to, or about, Whittington since that controlled press appearance.

Am I the only one, by the way, who doubts that Whittington was actually released from the hospital following that prepared statement? Isn't it more likely that he was prepped and trotted out just as soon as he was physically able to stand and read the statement – for the rather obvious purpose of driving yet another nail into the coffin of this story – and then promptly returned to a hospital bed, most likely at an undisclosed private facility? After all, even if he hadn't been shot, what is the likelihood that an elderly man with enough money to afford the very best in medical care would be released directly from an intensive care unit so soon after suffering a heart attack? And how quickly, by the way, did the media drop this story following Mr. Whittington's highly-publicized 'release'?

In addition to following Armstrong's lead in grossly misrepresenting the severity of Whittington's injuries, the medical team tending to the wounded lawyer has refused to release information that is essential to any meaningful investigation of the shooting. Asked, for example, for the results of tests of Whittington's blood alcohol level upon admission, the only response has been "no comment." Questions concerning the number of pellets embedded in Whittington's flesh have been brushed aside with the claim that such concerns are not "medically relevant." Doctors have also "declin[ed] to say whether Whittington had had surgery." (Ian Urbina "Cheney Account Questioned," International Herald Tribune, February 16, 2006, and Nedra Pickler "Experts: Cheney Violated Cardinal Rule of Hunting," Charlotte Observer, February 14, 2006)





What still remains a mystery is exactly how this shooting occurred. Though there has been little mention of such unpleasant topics in the media, mainstream or otherwise, Mr. Whittington could not possibly have been accidentally shot in the manner described by Cheney and Armstrong. As I mentioned at the top of this post, quail are shot while in flight, which means that in order to actually shoot one, it is generally a good idea to have your gun pointed in an upward direction while firing, as that will greatly increase the chances of scoring a hit. The normal shooting stance can be seen demonstrated by the marksman in white at the top of this page, and can also be seen in these photos of Deadeye Dick himself lining up a shot at a bird in flight.

According to the initial story belatedly put out by Cheney and Rove via Katharine Armstrong, and then repeated by Cheney during his chat with Hume, Whittington was some 30 yards away from Cheney when he was shot. But how could a shot fired in such a manner possibly hit a man who was standing nearly 100 feet away. How could such a shot hit a man standing any distance away? And how, in such wide open terrain, could you fail to see a fellow hunter clad in a bright orange hunting vest and cap?

"Perhaps," you are thinking, "Whittington was at a higher elevation, possibly standing on a bluff or something of that nature." By all accounts, however, that does not appear to be the case. Cheney described the area of south Texas where they were hunting as being characterized by "wide open spaces," with "a lot of brush cover, fairly shallow." Not unlike, in other words, the field in which Cheney is standing in the photos above -- the photos in which Cheney's hunting partners are clearly visible to his right.

The *Texas Parks and Wildlife Hunting Accident and Incident Report Form* provides a more detailed account of the hunting conditions at Armstrong Ranch the day of the incident. The "topography" is described as "flat," "visibility" was said to be "fair," "type of cover" was described as "light," "lighting" was "sunny," and the "weather" was "clear." Again, this description provides no explanation either for the peculiar angle of Cheney's alleged shot, or for



| Witness Name        | Address         | City      | State/Province | Telephone   |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------|----------------|-------------|
| Katharine Armstrong | Armstrong Ranch | Armstrong | TX             | (361) _____ |
|                     |                 |           |                |             |
|                     |                 |           |                |             |

**\*ANIMAL BEING HURT BY SHOOTER**

|                                    |                                                     |                                      |                                           |                                           |                                          |                                     |                                   |                                   |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deer      | <input type="checkbox"/> Duck/Geese                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Dove/Pigeon | <input type="checkbox"/> Antelope         | <input type="checkbox"/> Bear             | <input type="checkbox"/> Bobcat          | <input type="checkbox"/> Cottontail | <input type="checkbox"/> Coyote   | <input type="checkbox"/> Crow     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moose     | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-game birds and mammals |                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Pheasant         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quail | <input type="checkbox"/> Fox             | <input type="checkbox"/> Grouse     | <input type="checkbox"/> Hares    | <input type="checkbox"/> Javelina |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wild Boar | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Upland Game Birds    |                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Small Game |                                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Raccoon/Opossum |                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Squirrel | <input type="checkbox"/> Turkey   |
|                                    |                                                     |                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____     |                                           |                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown    |                                   |                                   |

**VI. MISCELLANEOUS FACTORS**

|                                                                      |                                           |                                           |                                  |                                |                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Topography: (Check one only) <input type="checkbox"/> Hilly          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Flat  | Unknown                                   | Describe _____                   | Describe _____                 | Describe _____                   |
| Visibility: (Check one only) <input type="checkbox"/> Good           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair  | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor             | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown | <input type="checkbox"/> Dense | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown |
| Type of cover: (Check one only) <input type="checkbox"/> Open        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Light | <input type="checkbox"/> Medium           | <input type="checkbox"/> Dense   | <input type="checkbox"/> Dark  | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown |
| Lighting: (Check one only) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sunny | <input type="checkbox"/> Overcast         | <input type="checkbox"/> Dawn             | <input type="checkbox"/> Dusk    | <input type="checkbox"/> Snow  | <input type="checkbox"/> Fog     |
| Weather: (Check one only) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clear  | <input type="checkbox"/> Calm             | <input type="checkbox"/> Windy            | <input type="checkbox"/> Rain    | <input type="checkbox"/> Snow  | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown |
| Distance from muzzle to victim in yards: _____                       | <input type="checkbox"/> 0-10             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 11-50 | <input type="checkbox"/> 51-100  | <input type="checkbox"/> 101+  | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown |

**VII. \*CONTRIBUTING FACTORS—Mark major factor with an X. Mark additional factors with an A.**

**Hunter's Judgement Factors**

☐ Victim moved into line of fire

☒ Victim covered by shooter who was swinging on game

☐ Victim out of sight of shooter

☐ Victim mistaken for game

**Safety/Law Violations**

☐ Running/walking with loaded firearm

☐ Removing/placing firearm in vehicle

☐ Using firearm as a club

☐ Discharge firearm in/on vehicle

☐ Firearm fell from insecure rest

☐ Shooting from/across roadway

☐ "Horseplay" while hunting

☐ Apparent use of intoxicants/drugs

**Miscellaneous Factors**

☐ Fall from watercraft

☐ Improper powder substitution

☐ Mixed Ammo/incorrect substitution

☐ Faulty Equipment

☐ Ricochet

☐ Obstruction in barrel

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Skill and Aptitude Factors**

☐ Trigger caught on object

☐ Loading firearm

☐ Unloading firearm

☐ Improper crossing of obstacle

☐ Dropped firearm

☐ Shooter stumbled and fell

☐ Careless handling of firearm (please describe in detail) \_\_\_\_\_

**Archery Related Factors**

☐ Archery not matched to bow

☐ Careless handling of bow/arrow

☐ Carrying nocked arrow

☐ Defective bow or arrow

☐ Springing bow

**Treestand Related Factors**

☐ Fall while climbing into or out of position

☐ Failure to use haul line

☐ Failure to use safety belt

☐ Faulty/old material/equipment

**VIII. Summary:**

Whittington downed a bird and went to retrieve it. While he was out of the hunting line another covey was flushed and Cheney swung on a bird and fired striking Whittington in the face, neck and chest at approximately 30 yards. Cheney was using a 28 gauge shotgun loaded with 7 1/2 shot. Immediate medical attention was rendered from Cheney's staff.

Factory

below.

78703

78

☐ N/A

☐ Female

OWN

OWN

OWN

OWN

☐ Unk

8

OWNERS

X

**IX. Attachments:** ☐ Continuation ☐ Photos ☐ Drawings ☐ Shooter's Statement ☐ Victim's Statement ☐ Witness' Statement ☐ Other

Note: Please attach a copy of local law enforcement/hospital report.

**X.** Game Warden's Signature: Jason Luke Game Warden I Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Report: 02/13/2006

Please return through proper channels to:

Texas Parks and Wildlife  
Attn: Education  
4200 Smith School Road  
Austin, Texas 78744  
512/389-4999

For education Division Use:  
Received by: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name

Signature

Date

Cheney's failure to see Mr. Whittington before pulling the trigger.

It should be noted here that Whittington would not have been in Cheney's peripheral field of view when that trigger was pulled. Contrary to the impression created by initial reports, the diagram included in the Accident Report Form, and more recent medical reports, clearly indicate that Whittington took nearly the full force of Cheney's shot. In fact, Cheney's shot was centered in the kill zone, with the tightly-grouped pattern of birdshot covering Whittington's lower face, neck, shoulder and upper chest. Cheney could not have scored a more well placed kill-shot if he had drawn a bead directly on Mr. Whittington's upper torso -- which in fact is exactly what he did, given that Whittington would have had to be lined up perfectly in the gun's sights when the shot was fired.

Cheney has rendered this story even more unlikely by claiming that Whittington was actually *at a lower elevation* than Cheney himself. He told Hume that, "there was a little bit of a gully there, so he was down a little ways before land level, although I could see the upper part of his body." The Kenedy County Sheriff's Department report repeats this claim: "the reason Harry Whittington sustained the injuries to his face and upper body was that Mr. Whittington was standing on ground that was lower than the one he [Cheney] was standing on."

By Cheney's own account then, he was not holding the gun in a level position, which would be curious enough, but was actually firing *in a downward direction*. That might be an effective technique for, say, shooting your own hunting dog, but it isn't a very effective technique for bagging quail.

Terry Erwin, the president of the International Hunter Education Association, criticized Cheney's alleged actions in the L.A. Times, noting that: "You would never turn around and fire behind you. If the bird comes back over you, you would not take that shot." But let's assume, for the sake of argument, that you would take that shot -- or, more accurately, that Dick Cheney would. Because he is, after all, the Vice President of the United States, and if someone of such relatively low stature as the governor of my state can ride a motorcycle without a license and, in doing so, cause an accident, and then suffer no legal repercussions, then by God my Vice President ought to be able to hunt without the proper license and recklessly shoot someone in the face while doing so! (Nicholas Riccardi and James Gerstenzang "Hunter Suffers Setback as Criticism of Cheney Grows," Los Angeles Times, February 15, 2006)

But there is, alas, a bit of a problem here, because *even if he did take that shot*, at a bird that had "come back over" him, he certainly wouldn't have been shooting in a downward direction. And if the bird had come not over but around him (which is extremely unlikely, but let's play along), then Cheney, being the seasoned, responsible hunter that we all know him to be, certainly wouldn't have swung his weapon around while tracking the bird on a horizontal course, since such a reckless action would clearly have endangered his fellow hunters, his security detail, and anyone else who happened to be standing beside or behind him. (As Cheney noted, he hunts with a large "entourage" -- which he described as "all the cars and so forth that follow me around when I'm out there.")

There is yet another problem with the official account of the shooting: both the tightness of the pattern of the shot and the depth of penetration indicate that Mr. Whittington was not, in fact, standing nearly 100 feet from Cheney when he was shot. The "30 yard" figure was apparently initially floated out there to minimize the perceived severity of Whittington's wounds. It will be recalled that when the story first belatedly broke, countless experts were quoted in the press offering up the opinion that the damage from a 28-gauge shotgun loaded with birdshot would be relatively minor if fired from that distance. This initial report from the Los Angeles Times was typical:

Dr. Marshall Morgan, chief of emergency medicine at UCLA Medical Center, said the severity of shotgun injuries depended on the distance between the gun and the person hit by it. "A shotgun injury to a person, unless it's at close range, is unlikely to produce a lethal injury that a handgun or a rifle would," he said. When a shotgun goes off, the pellets are in a relatively tight pattern, able to inflict severe damage within 20 feet, Morgan said. But as they travel, the pellets spread out and slow down. "The really controlling factor is the distance," he said. (Alan C. Miller and James Gerstenzang "Cheney Shoots Fellow Hunter," Los Angeles Times, February 13, 2006)

Since Mr. Whittington's injuries were considerably more severe than originally reported, we are left with two possibilities: either all the experts who weighed in initially to claim that Whittington's reported injuries were consistent with a shot fired from 30 yards were lying (or simply mistaken), or the shot was actually fired from a much shorter distance. And while it is not uncommon for the government and the media to trot out a series of scripted experts (consider, for example, all the 'experts' who have 'validated' various aspects of the official 9-11 story), that does not appear to be the case here. According to the gun owners and hunters that I have spoken with, Mr. Whittington's injuries *as initially reported* would have been consistent with a shot fired from 30 yards. His *actual injuries*, however, clearly are not, as was noted by the International Herald Tribune:

Veteran hunters and shooting experts said Thursday that they still don't understand how the vice president injured his fellow hunting partner so badly if he was actually 30 yards away as Cheney says. "It just doesn't add up," said John Kelly, a quail hunter from New York with more than 36 years of experience. "With a shotgun, the pellets spread out the further you get, and for that many pellets to hit such a small part of this man's body means that Mr. Cheney was far closer" than the 27-meter distance cited. (Ian Urbina "Cheney Account Questioned," International Herald Tribune, February 16, 2006)

## **NEWSLETTER #79**

**March 10, 2006**

### **Cheney's Got a Gun: Part 2**

<http://www.davesweb.cncost.com/nwsltr79.html>

*Aspects of Vice President Dick Cheney's quail hunt make ethical hunters and hunter safety instructors cringe. From reports, we know that this hunting party consisted of three hunters and, thus, three guns. This is highly unusual and generally seen as unsafe. Nearly every hunting preserve I know of here in the Southeast restricts upland bird hunt parties to two guns, for obvious reasons: one hunter takes the left side, one the right side. There is generally a dog and a guide (the dog handler), who is very careful to stay behind the guns after the dogs go on point ... Reports say the hunters were hunting by car. Too old and feeble to walk? Too lazy? An upland bird hunt by car is an offensive idea to any honest, ethical hunter. This sounds like irresponsible cruising for easy shooting, rather than the time-honored tradition of slowly walking the fields and brush, watching the dogs work, and -- if you're lucky -- finding a covey or two of quail ... The idea of hunting from a car is bad. It's dangerous because hunters would be getting in and out, guns pointing every which way, losing track of the wind, the weather, the angle of the sun, the energy level of the dogs. Hunting from a car is, for able-bodied hunters at least, completely antithetical to honest, ethical hunting. One of the cardinal rules of any bird hunt: Don't shoot low birds. Why? It is more difficult to see birds against the ground than against the sky. It is possible that something besides a bird might be on the ground, and thus in the way; generally this would be the dog ... As a hunter and conservationist, I feel misrepresented by Cheney and his ilk. They portray hunting as a sport for the rich, carried out on vast private lands, where pulling the trigger takes priority over everything else. (<http://www.charlotte.com/mld/observer/news/opinion/13866143.htm>)*

*Quail hunting for years has been called the sport of aristocracy ... Quail hunting is a gentleman's game and is often a spectator and participator sport at the same time ... most quail hunts involve a pair of dogs and a pair of hunters in the field at the same time. Each dog is competing to see which one can locate a covey of quail first. Once one of the dogs zeros in on his quarry, he will freeze on "point." The other dog is trained to "honor" the pointing dog by actually freezing and pointing that dog. This is when the excitement builds in anticipation of an explosion of whirring wings known as the covey flush. An awareness of all of the gunners responsibilities and location of each prior to the flush is an absolute necessity. Strict gun discipline is required. While wind conditions and proximity of escape cover for the flushing birds may alter what I am about to say, as a rule of thumb the hunters should approach their dogs from behind the dogs. The gun muzzles should be oriented skyward and the shotgun needs to remain on safety until mounted to one's shoulder. The two hunters should approach the dogs, one on either side, and in a straight line with one another. This*

*straight line is very important for the safety of each hunter. Prior to moving on up and allowing the birds to flush, each hunter should visibly and mentally locate: each other, both dogs, the hunting rig, and the hunting guide if on a guided hunt. Each hunter should know in advance where he can and cannot swing the muzzle of his gun to follow an escaping quail. Each hunter's range of gun swing should be from the mid-point between him and his partner and out to his side. He should never cross the mid-point to shoot at a quail flying on his partner's side. Not only is this poor shotgunning etiquette, it is dangerous. Additionally, a quail hunter should never take a shot at a low flying quail that would cause him to lower the muzzle of his shotgun below a horizontal plane with the ground. Taking a shot at a low-flying quail has ended the life of many fine pointing dogs since the inception of this great sport. If each hunter places safety and sportsmanship at a much higher priority than actually pulling the trigger, quail hunting is truly a unique hunting experience.* ([http://www.riverviewplantation.com/Quail\\_Hunting\\_Tips/quail\\_hunting\\_tips.html](http://www.riverviewplantation.com/Quail_Hunting_Tips/quail_hunting_tips.html))

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(The first quote above is from an op/ed piece that was published by the Charlotte Observer in response to the Cheney shooting incident. The second is from the website of the "Riverview Plantation," a private hunting reserve in Georgia that "Specializ[es] in Quail Hunting for the Corporate Account." In other words, it is a place not unlike the Armstrong Ranch in south Texas. While the above quote reads very much like a commentary on the Cheney shooting, and a condemnation of Cheney's stated actions, it actually is not. In an attempt to prompt some direct commentary on the incident, I sent an e-mail inquiry to the owners of the plantation. I'm still waiting for a response. I forgot to ask them, by the way, if they would consider hunting with Dick Cheney to be a good "spectator sport.")

One of the most amazing things about this case is that even if we accept without question the tale told by Cheney and Armstrong - if we accept that this 'accident' occurred exactly as we have been told it happened - it is perfectly obvious that the consensus media opinion that there was no misconduct or negligence is simply untrue. *By his own account*, Cheney was hunting by vehicle, a decidedly unsafe, and unethical, practice. *By his own account*, he was out in a three-man hunting party. *By his own account*, he made no effort to ascertain the whereabouts of anyone else in his party before firing away. *By his own account*, he was firing at a bird that would have had to have been flying ridiculously low. *By his own account*, he swung his gun far beyond "the mid-point" to take his shot. *By his own account*, he had been drinking that day (undoubtedly far more than he has admitted to). *By his own account*, he was hunting in flat terrain with a party that included a hostess, two other hunters, several guides and outriders (scouts on horseback), a medical team, and a Secret Service team -- and yet he swung his gun around blindly a full 180° to take a shot at an alleged bird that was supposedly flying just a few feet off the ground.

By his own account, Cheney actions were, without question, criminally reckless. And yet, remarkably enough, the media machine has beat a hasty retreat from this story, implying that there is really nothing left to talk about.

Every gun-enthusiast organization in the country, including the venerable National Rifle Association, knows full well not only that Cheney's story cannot possibly be true, but that even if it were true, it would expose Cheney as a recklessly irresponsible gunman who certainly should be held accountable for his actions. All of these groups, nevertheless, have chosen to put their partisan, knee-jerk politics ahead of any sort of search for the truth of what happened that day. Cheney and company have insulted the intelligence of every responsible hunter and sport shooter in the country, and yet the groups representing these gun owners

have conspicuously chosen to remain silent.

As previously discussed, there are unanswered questions about both the angle of the shot and the distance between the shooter and victim. In addition, there is yet another problem with the official story -- a problem that no one in the media, to my knowledge, has yet commented upon. This problem was brought to my attention by Mr. Lester Gregg, Jr., a conscientious hunter from east Texas with more than 35 years experience. Commenting on Cheney's claim that he was tracking a bird in flight as he swung his weapon around, Gregg had this to say:

When taking a wing shot, you are swinging the barrel and leading the bird. This causes the shot to form a "string," roughly a long narrow oval in the air. The almost circular shot pattern reported on Whittington is typical of a *stationary* shot, point and shoot! This is a *very* important fact completely overlooked or misrepresented in the media. On CNN I heard a person from Field & Stream magazine glossing over the details and *never* remarking on this. There is no way he could not know this simple fact known by hunters and shooters.

So now we have at least three major problems with the official story: the angle of the shot is entirely inconsistent with accepted quail hunting practices; the tightness of the pattern and the depth of penetration are incompatible with the stated shooting distance; and the outline of the shot pattern is not consistent with Cheney's claimed 'wing shot.' And yet another problem with the official story was raised by the Charlotte Observer, which posed the following question: "Why was the hunter, Harry Whittington, looking for a downed bird? Were there no dogs? A quail hunt without a dog? Absurd. If there were dogs, why not have them go after the dead bird." A perfectly reasonable question, but one which Brit Hume didn't bother to ask. (Scott Denham "Cheney Ignored Safe Hunting Procedures," Charlotte Observer, February 14, 2006)

By Cheney's own account, there were indeed dogs along on the hunt: "There were three of us who had gotten out of the vehicle and walked up on a covey of quail that had been pointed by the dogs. Covey is flushed, we've shot, and each of us got a bird. Harry couldn't find his, it had gone down in some deep cover, and so he went off to look for it. The other hunter and I then turned and walked about a hundred yards in another direction ... away from him -- where another covey had been spotted by an outrider." (<http://msnbc.msn.com/id/11373634/>)

According to published accounts, in addition to the guide and the outriders, the hunting party also brought along hired help to dress and pack their downed birds. In other words, these gentlemen hunters' participation in the hunt involved little more than pulling the trigger. Though they were too lazy to actually walk the terrain in search of prey, or to perform such menial tasks as dressing their own kills, we are supposed to believe that gentleman hunter Harry Whittington, at nearly 79 years of age, ventured off alone into some rough terrain in search of his downed bird, while the dogs and various hired hands busied themselves, I presume, with dodging wild shots taken by Dick Cheney.

But let's assume, for the sake of argument, that Whittington really did venture off to fetch his own kill. That would, alas, raise yet another problem with the official story. According to the Cheney/Rove/Armstrong version of events, Cheney was unaware of Whittington's position because Harry had been approaching Dick (shouldn't there be a Tom in this story?) from behind, unannounced. Leaving aside the fact that it would have clearly been Cheney's responsibility to know Whittington's position prior to taking his shot, since even a novice hunter knows that you *never, ever* pull the trigger without knowing exactly what is in your line of fire, there is an obvious problem with this scenario. This was not, you see, your run-of-the-mill hunting party; this was a hunting party that included Dick Cheney, Vice President of





the United States and possibly the most well-guarded man on the planet.

Though only the [World Socialist Web Site](#) seems to have noticed, it is simply inconceivable that someone with a loaded shotgun could walk up behind the Vice President without Cheney and his security personnel being aware of it. And if Whittington was close enough to catch a full load of birdshot in his chest and face, then he was obviously close enough to deliver

one as well, and normally Cheney's army of security personnel keep tabs on such things.

The Charlotte Observer, alone among the media, took note of yet another troubling aspect of the official story: "Cheney shot Whittington at 5:15 p.m. on Saturday [5:30 p.m., according to official reports] -- way too late to be hunting quail. Good hunters hunt early in the day, when the light is good, the birds are active, and the dogs are fresh. One should generally not be out for quail this late in the day." (Scott Denham "Cheney Ignored Safe Hunting Procedures," Charlotte Observer, February 14, 2006)

Yet another curious fact: this incident occurred very late in the hunting season, and as any hunter knows, locating and flushing coveys of birds becomes progressively more difficult as the season wears on, as the population of birds is reduced and the remaining quail become savvy to the ways of the hunters pursuing them. Flushing two coveys in rapid succession so late in the season, and so late in the afternoon, would be extremely unlikely, and yet that is exactly what the official story claims to be the case.

The preceding paragraph, it should be noted, would not apply if Cheney's party was shooting at pen-raised quail on a controlled-release 'hunt,' as he has done in the past. But Cheney claimed otherwise during his chat with Hume, stressing that they had been hunting "wild quail." Of course, that could be just another of Dick Cheney's numerous lies, one he constructed so as to avoid the same sort of mild criticism he has received in the past for his participation in what amount to turkey shoots.

Here's yet another curious fact: according to all reports, Whittington was purportedly wearing hunting gear at the time of the shooting. But it's difficult to believe that he actually was. According to Cheney, Whittington "was wearing hunting glasses, and that protected his eyes." But during Whittington's brief media appearance, it certainly appeared as though his right eye had sustained damage from the shot. Reports also hold that Whittington was wearing a blaze orange hunting vest over three layers of street clothes. But it is difficult to believe that #7½ birdshot fired from a 28-gauge gun could penetrate four layers of clothing and still plow through a considerable amount of skin, muscle and various other bodily tissues, even from a much shorter distance than 30 yards.

It should be noted here that, as shotguns go, a 28-gauge gun is not a particularly powerful weapon. The most popular shotgun sizes, in descending order of magnitude, are 10-gauge, 12-gauge, 16-gauge, 20-gauge, 28-gauge, and 410-gauge. None of these guns - and particularly the smaller caliber weapons, which are typically loaded with lightweight birdshot - are designed for maximum penetration. The intent is not to shred the bird, but to bring it down with a minimal amount of damage to the meat. It is therefore extremely unlikely that a



weapon designed to barely penetrate the flesh of a bird could propel birdshot through four layers of clothing and then through the skin, muscle and bone of the human chest wall. It is even more unlikely that a piece of shot could 'migrate' through the chest wall and into the heart muscle. A reasonable conclusion to draw then is that Whittington was probably not attired as reports would have us believe.

So what do we have here? We have Harry Whittington supposedly being shot while returning from performing a duty that is entirely incompatible with this aristocratic group's hunting philosophy, we have a shot pattern that is wholly incompatible with both the alleged shooting distance and the type of shot that was supposedly being taken (a wing shot), we have a shooting angle that appears to contradict the notion that Cheney was shooting at a bird, we have a hunting party having phenomenal luck despite being out late in the day and late in the season, and we have a shooting victim who was likely attired in some manner other than what has been reported.

Most of the questions surrounding the shooting would have been answered had a routine investigation taken place. We would know, for example, the exact distance between shooter and victim. Had the gun and ammunition been taken into custody, ballistics tests could have been performed that could pinpoint that distance through comparisons of test patterns with the actual shot pattern imprinted on Whittington's torso. And we know that taking such actions is standard procedure -- and we know that because the Hunting Accident Report Form advises officers quite explicitly on how to proceed with a hunting incident investigation:

*If possible, firearms, archery tackle, ammunition/powder or other equipment involved in a hunting accident/incident should be taken into the custody of the investigating officer for testing and/or evaluation.*



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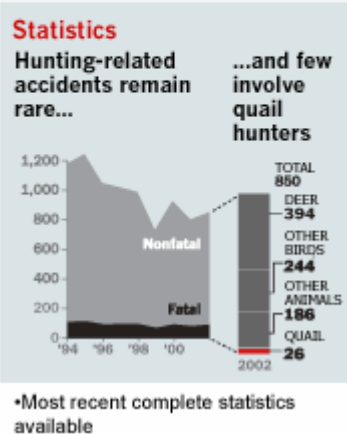
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Needless to say, that did not happen, so we do not know the precise distance from which the shot was fired. We know that "Whittington was hit with as many as 200 birdshot pellets." (Nedra Pickler "Experts: Cheney Violated Cardinal Rule of Hunting," Charlotte Observer, February 14, 2006) Doctors who tended to Whittington steadfastly avoided discussing the number wounds, though they did ultimately offer a ludicrously estimate of "between 5 and 200," leading many to conclude that the actual number was far closer to 200 5.

We also know that a 28-gauge shell loaded with the size that Cheney was using "would normally contain about pellets." (Ian Urbina "Cheney Account Questioned," International Herald Tribune, February 16, 2006) And know, from the diagram included in the Accident that roughly 200 of those birdshot pellets were tightly clustered within a fairly small, roughly circular area -- portion of the circle missing, from which we can deduce 25% or so of the pellets that missed their target likely over Whittington's right shoulder (though the illustration in the accident report erroneously shows the on his left side). We also know, from this photo and others, that Cheney to favor a shotgun with a fairly short barrel -- and likely open choke as well (the more open the choke, the larger diameter at the end of the barrel). And we know that the the barrel, and the more open the choke, the more scatter after exiting the barrel.

From all this we reach the inescapable conclusion that the shot that hit Harry Whittington was fired from considerably less than 30 yards. We cannot pinpoint the exact distance, but we know that it wasn't even close to the official claim. Alex Jones (who is not one of my preferred sources of information) has conducted a [test](#) that he claims proves the shot was fired from 15-18 feet away. Such a claim, however, overstates the conclusions that can be drawn from his test. Ideally, the test should utilize the very same gun and ammunition that Cheney was using -- or at least the exact same make and model of weapon, outfitted with a barrel of the same length and choke, and loaded with ammunition from the same manufacturer and with the same load and shot characteristics. Also, photographic or other evidence of the true extent of Whittington's wounds is required so that the shot pattern that the test is trying to match can first be ascertained.

Despite the problems with the test (and in fairness to Jones, there is obviously no way that he could have satisfied the second condition, since no such evidence has been, or ever will be, released), it does illustrate, rather convincingly, that it is inconceivable that *any* 28-gauge shotgun firing #7½ birdshot from anywhere near 30 yards away could have caused Harry Whittington's wounds. Both the concentration of pellets, and the depth of penetration, testify to the fact that the shot was fired from a much shorter distance.

Another hard and fast conclusion we can draw from the available evidence is that, contrary to

media reports and White House spin, hunting ‘accidents’ of this nature are virtually unheard of. According to the graphic to the right (provided by [Time Magazine](#)), there were only 850 hunting accidents throughout the country in 2002, and only 26 of those - a mere 3% - involved quail hunters. So we know that quail hunting accidents, in general, are quite rare. And this was no run-of-the-mill quail hunting accident. The Charlotte Observer has claimed that “hunting accidents like Cheney’s happened 34 times last year” in the state of Wisconsin.

(Robert Imrie "Hunting Accidents Like Cheney's Happened 34 Times Last Year," Charlotte Observer, February 13, 2006) The title of the Observer article, however, is very misleading, for the truth is that it is extremely unlikely that there were *any* hunting accidents "like Cheney's" last year in Wisconsin -- or in any of the other 49 states.

Of the three representative examples of "accidents like Cheney's" cited by the Observer, none

bears the slightest resemblance to Cheney's incident. James Manzke, for example, was hit in the hand with "one pellet that traveled 3 inches into the meaty part of his hand," while Gregory Horton "was wounded in the hand, arm, nose and head from eight 12-gauge shotgun pellets while pheasant hunting," and Joe Crosby "struck his father in the head, neck, chest and shoulder" with 15 pellets. These are the types of accidents that, while statistically not nearly as common as the White House spin team would have us believe, could reasonably be

expected to occur from time to time. *But there is, alas, an enormous difference between getting sprayed with a few pieces of stray shot, and getting blasted in the face and chest from short range with nearly a full load of shot.* That type of 'accident,' we can safely conclude, is an exceptionally rare event, enough so that should such an 'accident' occur, it would, under virtually any other conceivable circumstances, certainly be looked upon by law enforcement officials as a probable crime.

In this case, however, authorities didn't even bother to pretend that they had any intention of investigating the incident, as a quick read through the two-page Texas Parks and Wildlife Report readily reveals. Instructions to investigating officers *included right on the form* were willfully ignored. The weapon and ammunition, as previously noted, were not seized for examination and testing. A recommendation that "a copy of local law enforcement/hospital

| Witness Name        | Address         | City      | State/Province | Telephone   |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------|----------------|-------------|
| Katharine Armstrong | Armstrong Ranch | Armstrong | TX             | (361) _____ |
|                     |                 |           |                |             |
|                     |                 |           |                |             |
|                     |                 |           |                |             |

| *ANIMAL BEING HUNTED BY SHOOTER                  |                                                     |                                      |                                     |                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deer                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Duck/Geese                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Dove/Pigeon | <input type="checkbox"/> Antelope   | <input type="checkbox"/> Bear             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moose                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-game birds and mammals | <input type="checkbox"/> Wild Boar   | <input type="checkbox"/> Pheasant   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Upland Game Birds | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Small Game           | <input type="checkbox"/> Bobcat      | <input type="checkbox"/> Fox        | <input type="checkbox"/> Raccoon/Opossum  |
|                                                  |                                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:      | <input type="checkbox"/> Cottontail | <input type="checkbox"/> Grouse           |
|                                                  |                                                     |                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Coyote     | <input type="checkbox"/> Hares            |
|                                                  |                                                     |                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Squirrel   | <input type="checkbox"/> Turkey           |
|                                                  |                                                     |                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown    | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown          |

| VI. MISCELLANEOUS FACTORS                |                                           |                                           |                                 |                               |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Topography: (Check one only)             | <input type="checkbox"/> Hilly            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Flat  | Unknown                         | Describe                      |
| Visibility: (Check one only)             | <input type="checkbox"/> Good             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair  | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor   | Describe                      |
| Type of cover: (Check one only)          | <input type="checkbox"/> Open             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Light | <input type="checkbox"/> Medium | Describe                      |
| Lighting: (Check one only)               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sunny | <input type="checkbox"/> Overcast         | <input type="checkbox"/> Dawn   | Describe                      |
| Weather: (Check one only)                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clear | <input type="checkbox"/> Calm             | <input type="checkbox"/> Windy  | Describe                      |
| Distance from muzzle to victim in yards: | <input type="checkbox"/> 0-10             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 11-50 | <input type="checkbox"/> 51-100 | <input type="checkbox"/> 101+ |

| VII. *CONTRIBUTING FACTORS—Mark major factor with an X. Mark additional factors with an A.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Hunter's Judgement Factors</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> Victim moved into line of fire<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Victim covered by shooter who was swinging on game<br><input type="checkbox"/> Victim out of sight of shooter<br><input type="checkbox"/> Victim mistaken for game                                                                                                                            | <b>Safety/Law Violations</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> Running/walking with loaded firearm<br><input type="checkbox"/> Removing/placing firearm in vehicle<br><input type="checkbox"/> Using firearm as a club<br><input type="checkbox"/> Discharge firearm in/on vehicle<br><input type="checkbox"/> Firearm fell from insecure rest<br><input type="checkbox"/> Shooting from/across road/way<br><input type="checkbox"/> "Horseplay" while hunting<br><input type="checkbox"/> Apparent use of intoxicants/drugs | <b>Miscellaneous Factors</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> Fall from watercraft<br><input type="checkbox"/> Improper powder substitution<br><input type="checkbox"/> Mixed Ammo/Incorrect substitution<br><input type="checkbox"/> Faulty Equipment<br><input type="checkbox"/> Ricochet<br><input type="checkbox"/> Obstruction in barrel<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <b>Skill and Aptitude Factors</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> Trigger caught on object<br><input type="checkbox"/> Loading firearm<br><input type="checkbox"/> Unloading firearm<br><input type="checkbox"/> Improper crossing of obstacle<br><input type="checkbox"/> Dropped firearm<br><input type="checkbox"/> Shooter stumbled and fell<br><input type="checkbox"/> Careless handling of firearm (please describe in detail) | <b>Archery Related Factors</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> Archery not matched to bow<br><input type="checkbox"/> Careless handling of bow/arrow<br><input type="checkbox"/> Carrying nocked arrow<br><input type="checkbox"/> Defective bow or arrow<br><input type="checkbox"/> Stringing bow                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Treestand Related Factors</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> Fall while climbing into or out of position<br><input type="checkbox"/> Failure to use haul line<br><input type="checkbox"/> Failure to use safety belt<br><input type="checkbox"/> Faulty/old material/equipment                                                                                             |


  

| VIII. Summary:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Whittington downed a bird and went to retrieve it. While he was out of the hunting line another covey was flushed and Cheney swung on a bird and fired striking Whittington in the face, neck and chest at approximately 30 yards. Cheney was using a 28 gauge shotgun loaded with 7 1/2 shot. Immediate medical attention was rendered from Cheney's staff. |  |
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|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| IX. Attachments: <input type="checkbox"/> Continuation <input type="checkbox"/> Photos <input type="checkbox"/> Drawings <input type="checkbox"/> Shooter's Statement <input type="checkbox"/> Victim's Statement <input type="checkbox"/> Witness' Statement <input type="checkbox"/> Other |  |
| Note: Please attach a copy of local law enforcement/hospital report.                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |

|                                                                                                                   |                        |                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| X. <br>Game Warden's Signature | Game Warden I<br>Title | 02/13/2006<br>Date of Report |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|

Please return through proper channels to:  
  
 For education Division Use:  
 Received by: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Printed Name

Texas Parks and Wildlife  
 Attn: Education  
 4200 Smith School Road  
 Austin, Texas 78744  
 512/389-4999

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_

PWD-579-D0200-2/00

report” be attached to the form was likewise ignored. Other attachments are curiously absent as well, including a “Shooter’s Statement,” “a “Victim’s Statement,” and “Witness’ Statements.” Instead, all we find is a very brief summary of the incident that is simply a rote repetition of the official cover story. That story was supplied by the one and only witness listed on the form - Katharine Armstrong of Armstrong, Texas.

The shooter, Richard B. Cheney, was obviously a witness to the event as well, but it appears quite likely that he was not actually interviewed. In the brief section of the report reserved for information about the shooter, “Years hunting experience” is left blank and “Hunter Education Certified?” is marked “Unknown,” although such mundane information could have been quickly and easily gathered had the shooter actually been even briefly questioned.

The Kenedy County Sheriff’s Department also made no effort to actually investigate the shooting. And the department seemed to have a little trouble keeping its story straight initially, offering varying versions of the initial law enforcement response to the shooting. Sheriff Ramon Salinas III first told the New York Times that his deputy had questioned Cheney Saturday night, not long after the shooting. But other reports held that a deputy responding to reports of the shooting had in fact been turned away at the gates of the property (I wasn’t even aware that I apparently have the option of turning away investigating officers should a shooting ever occur on my property. Is the LAPD aware of this?)

Secret Service agents later claimed that they had promptly notified the sheriff of the shooting, and had, at that time, arranged an interview with Cheney for Sunday morning. Salinas then quickly changed his story and claimed that he had made the decision not to send a deputy on Saturday night. But on February 14, the Washington Post reported the following: “Secret Service spokesman Eric Zahren said *at least one deputy was turned away* shortly after the shooting because security personnel at the ranch were not aware of the agreement between the sheriff and the Secret Service.” That statement, it should be noted, was more than a little bizarre, given that the turning away of law enforcement personnel only makes sense if the “security personnel” *were aware* of the supposed agreement and had relayed that information to the investigating officer. (<http://mediamatters.org/items/printable/200602150014>)

The next day, Zahren added a few more modifications to the story, telling the New York Times that “some local police officers had heard about the shooting on a scanner when an ambulance was sent to pick up Mr. Whittington. They showed up at the ranch unsolicited. Private guards, not Secret Service agents, Mr. Zahren said, turned the police away because they did not know anything had occurred.” So now it was private security guards turning away police officers, rather than Secret Service agents turning away sheriff’s deputies, with the added caveat that the officers learned of the shooting independently when an ambulance was dispatched. That’s a nice story, I suppose, except for the fact that Cheney has claimed that the hunting party didn’t need to call an ambulance, since they already “had an ambulance at the ranch, because one follows me around wherever I go.” And then, of course, there is the decidedly dubious claim that real cops would defer to the authority of rent-a-cops.

Sheriff Salinas’ final report on the incident, issued on February 15, offered yet another version of events:

On February 11, 2006 at approximately 5:30 p.m., I, Ramon Salinas, III, and Sheriff of Kenedy County received a telephone call at my home from Captain Charles Kirk in reference to a possible hunting accident that had occurred at the Armstrong Ranch. Captain Kirk stated



that he was on his way to the Armstrong gate to get more information.

About 8 to 10 minutes later, I received another call from a United States Secret Service Agent; I believe his name was Martinez. He said the purpose of the call was to officially notify the Kenedy County Sheriff's Office of a hunting accident that had just occurred on the Armstrong Ranch and that it involved Vice-President Cheney.

After I hung up, Captain Kirk called me back and said that he'd made contact with a Border Patrol agent at the Armstrong gate and that the Agent told him that he didn't know anything about the accident. I then told Captain Kirk that it was fine and that I would contact someone on the Ranch.

After speaking with Captain Kirk I contacted Constable Ramiro Medellin Jr., former Sheriff of Kenedy County and asked him if he had any information about the accident. Constable Medellin stated that he would call me right back.

Constable Medellin returned my call and said, "This in fact is an accident." He stated that he had spoken with some of the people in the hunting party who were eyewitnesses and that they all said it was definitely a hunting accident. I also spoke with another eyewitness and he said the same thing, that it was an accident.

After hearing the same information from eyewitnesses and Constable Medellin, it was at this time that I decided to send my Chief Deputy first thing Sunday morning to interview the Vice-President and other witnesses.

A few minutes later, I received another call from the Secret Service asking if I was going to send someone to the Ranch. I told him that someone would be there first thing in the morning. The Secret Service said they would be at the gate waiting.

At approximately 6:15 p.m. I contacted Chief Deputy San Miguel and advised him of the incident and to be at the gate at approximately 8:00 a.m. (<http://www.caller2.com/2006/pdf/kcsr.pdf>)

There is certainly no shortage of irregularities in the sheriff's brief, poorly written report. First of all, we now find that Salinas was first informed of the shooting - and I couldn't make this stuff up if I wanted to, folks - by Captain Kirk. And the phone call from Kirk to Salinas came in at 5:30 p.m., which just happens to be the exact time that Whittington was shot, according to all official accounts. So what happened was that Whittington was shot, his wounds were tended to at the scene, an ambulance was summoned (even though there was already one there), which Captain Kirk picked up on via a scanner, after which he headed out towards the ranch while phoning Salinas. And all of that happened, of course, instantaneously, so that Salinas actually knew about the shooting the very second that the shot was fired.

By 5:40 p.m., just ten minutes after the shot was fired, a Secret Service agent had already contacted Salinas to again inform him of the shooting, but Salinas didn't bother to note the agent's name, because when someone calls to report a shooting involving the Vice-President of the United States, it's not really important to make a note of who that person is.

Immediately after that call, Captain Kirk called back to say that he had arrived at the Armstrong gate, where he encountered not a Secret Service agent, and not a private security officer, but rather a Border Patrol agent, who was, I'm guessing, patrolling the borders of the

Armstrong Ranch. That agent did not, however, turn Captain Kirk away, as previously reported. Instead, Kirk was called off by Sheriff Salinas, who then called Constable Medellin to see if he just happened to have any information on a shooting that had taken place just minutes before.

Constable Medellin then promptly called back to confidently inform Salinas that "This in fact is an accident," even though nobody that I've ever known actually talks like that, and even though Constable Medellin couldn't possibly have known the details of the shooting less than half an hour after it had taken place. Nevertheless, he boldly claimed to have spoken to multiple eyewitnesses, and Salinas added that he had also spoken to an eyewitness, though none of these alleged witnesses are named, undoubtedly because they don't actually exist.

By 6:15 p.m., just 45 minutes after the shot was fired - and while the hunting party was still focused on tending to Whittington, according to Cheney's account, and not yet concerned with notifying authorities or the media - both the Sheriff and the Constable had spoken to multiple witnesses and were satisfied that this was nothing more than a routine hunting accident. And they had, remarkably enough, talked to all those witnesses a full 45 minutes before the hunting party had even made it back to the house! That, I have to say, is some pretty impressive police work.

To be continued yet again ...

## ***NEWSLETTER #80***

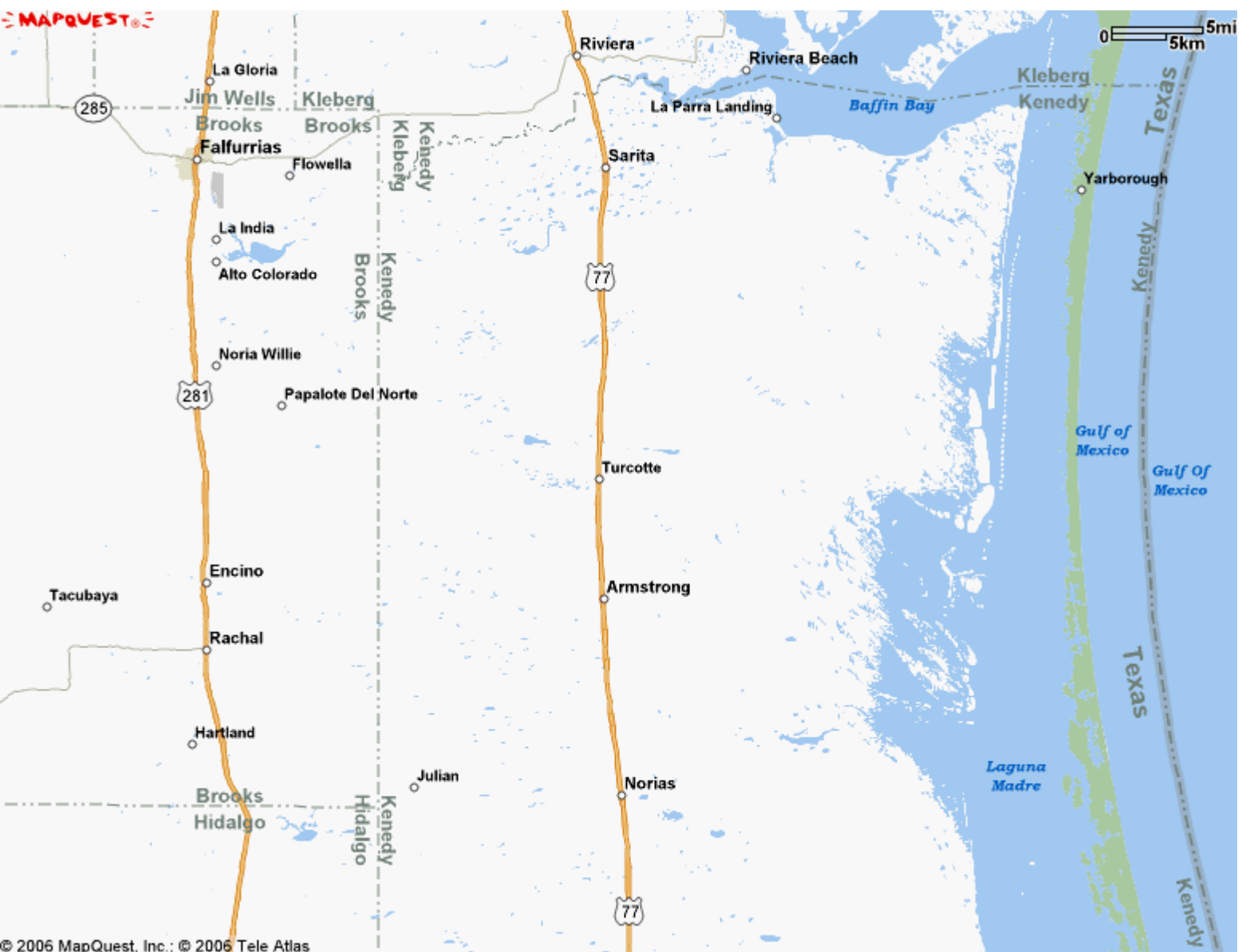
***March 10, 2006***

***Cheney's Got a Gun: Part 3***

***<http://www.davesweb.cncast.com/nwsltr80.html>***

According to the report filed by Gilberto San Miguel Jr., the sheriff's deputy who allegedly questioned Cheney the day after the incident, potential witnesses to the shooting included: Richard Cheney, the current Vice-President of the United States; [Pamela Pitzer Willeford](#), the current US ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein; Harry Whittington, a wealthy Texas attorney and Republican Party operative; Katharine Armstrong, the hunting party's hostess and the daughter of the owner of the ranch; Sarita Armstrong Hixon, some random member of the Armstrong family; Michael Andrew "Bo" Hubert, the hunting guide; and Oscar and Gerardo "Jerry" Medellin, the outriders.

Curiously, there is no mention in the deputy's report of the Secret Service agents or the medical personnel who accompanied the hunting party, though they obviously were all potential witnesses as well. And even more curiously, no report on the incident has been released by the Secret Service, though you would think that they would weigh in on a shooting involving the Vice-President that occurred on their watch.



It's hard not to notice, by the way, that two alleged members of the hunting party just happen to have the same last name as the police constable who determined in record time that "this in

fact is an accident." Small world, isn't it? It's also hard not to notice that the name of another member of the party contains the names of two of the handful of towns that make up Kenedy County, Texas: Armstrong and Sarita. One wonders if Kenedy County is little more than the Armstrong family's private fiefdom. Perhaps this is a good time to take a quick look at some Armstrong family history.

The 50,000-acre Armstrong Ranch was established by John Barclay Armstrong, great-grandfather of star witness Katharine Armstrong. As Wikipedia tells it, "Armstrong was born in Tennessee, and moved to Texas in 1871. After a short experience as a lawman, *in 1875 he joined the Special Force under Captain Leander H. McNelly, a newly created quasi-military branch of the Texas Rangers that was to operate in southern Texas.* His role as McNelly's second in command and right hand earned him the promotion to sergeant and the nickname 'McNelly's Bulldog.'"

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Barclay\\_Armstrong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Barclay_Armstrong))

The Handbook of Texas Online provides some additional context to the story: "American settlement in the region [that was to become Kenedy County] was slow but increased after the Mexican War. New settlers were generally welcomed by the Mexican rancheros, and a number of the newcomers married into prominent local families. Ethnic relations began to change during the second half of the nineteenth century, however, when steadily growing numbers of Anglo-Americans began to settle in South Texas. Increasingly, Mexican landholding families found their titles in jeopardy in the courts or were subjected to violence. The so-called 'skinning wars' of the early 1870s were indicative of mounting ethnic and racial tensions in the area. Because of rising prices for hides and the large number of mavericks, or free-ranging cattle, some ranchers went on skinning raids, killing the animals and taking their hides, a practice that often pitted Mexican and Anglo ranchers against each other. *Tensions grew in 1875 after a group of Anglos attacked several ranches in the future Kenedy County in retaliation for raids made by Mexican ranchers. Vigilantes and outlaws from Corpus Christi raided the area, killing virtually all of the adult males on four ranches-La Atravesada, El Peñascal, Corral de Piedra, and El Mesquite-and burning the stores and buildings;* many of the remaining Mexican rancheros were forced out."

([http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/KK/hck4\\_print.html](http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/KK/hck4_print.html))

Elsewhere in the Handbook, we find that "in 1874 the state Democrats returned to power, and so did the rangers. Texas was 'overrun with bad men,' with Indians ravaging the western frontier, with Mexican bandits pillaging and murdering along the Rio Grande. The legislature authorized two unique military groups to meet this emergency. The first was the Special Force of Rangers under Capt. Leander H. McNelly. In 1874 he and his men helped curb lawlessness engendered by the deadly Sutton-Taylor Feud in Dewitt County. *In the spring of 1875 they moved into the Nueces Strip (between Corpus Christi and the Rio Grande) to combat Cortina's 'favorite bravos.'* After eight months of fighting, the rangers had largely restored order, if not peace, in the area. *In 1875 the Special Force enhanced its fearful reputation by stacking twelve dead rustlers 'like cordwood' in the Brownsville square as a lethal response to the death of one ranger.*"

(<http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/TT/met4.html>)

(Before moving on, a quick clarification is in order here: when The Handbook of Texas Online says that Indians were "ravaging the western frontier" and Mexicans were "pillaging and murdering along the Rio Grande," what they really mean, in a politically correct sort of way, is that indigenous peoples were doing their best to defend their land and their way of life from brutal and barbaric foreign invaders, much as the people of Iraq are trying to do today.)

Julian Borger, writing for the Guardian, informs us that "the Armstrong Ranch ... [was] founded in 1877 by John Barclay Armstrong." Borger adds that Tobin Armstrong, Katharine's recently deceased father, "helped get Cheney his job running the oil services company, Halliburton, and his backing ensured Karl Rove's fledgling political consultancy became a success." Other sources, it should be noted, claim that the Armstrong Ranch was established in 1881 or 1882. My guess is that the land was acquired in 1877 and the ranch was built on that land a few years later. (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/guardianweekly/story/0,,1715561,00.html>)

Let's briefly review what we have learned here thus far. In 1875, John Barclay Armstrong joined a Special Forces unit of the Texas Rangers (which was itself formed as something of a Special Forces unit, tasked with 'protecting' the Western frontier from 'marauding' Mexicans and Native Americans). Armstrong's unit proved to be a particularly brutal one, engaging in psy-war tactics such as building gruesome displays of dead bodies (can you say Phoenix Program?). In the spring of 1875, the unit was operating in the Nueces Strip, which just happens to be where Kenedy County is now located. That very same year, a group of unnamed Anglo terrorists laid waste to what would become Kenedy County, wantonly slaughtering the native residents and destroying their homes. Just two years later, John Barclay Armstrong took possession of a 50,000-acre chunk of that very same bloodstained plot of land.

Now, I'm not suggesting here that the Armstrong land was acquired through an act of mass murder ... well, actually, if we're to be perfectly honest, that is exactly what I am suggesting. There isn't likely to be any documentation in the official record to prove that the "vigilantes and outlaws from Corpus Christi" were in fact elements of John Armstrong's Special Forces unit, but the pieces of the puzzle certainly seem to fit together nicely.

Armstrong was certainly no stranger to the ways of the gun. During his checkered law enforcement career, he killed or assisted in the killing of at least a half dozen men, and probably considerably more. His biggest claim to fame was the capture of the nearly mythical figure of John Wesley Hardin in 1877, for which he reportedly received a \$4,000 reward, a considerable bounty in those days. It was with that money that he reportedly built the Armstrong Ranch. ([http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/AA/far10\\_print.html](http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/AA/far10_print.html) and John Cloud "Inside the Shooting at the Ranch," Time Magazine, February 27, 2006)

Who John Wesley Hardin really was is difficult to determine, though we do know that he was also no stranger to the ways of the gun. As with other Western 'outlaws,' the true story of Hardin undoubtedly bears little resemblance to the grandiose legend. The fact that there was more to the Hardin story than what is revealed in the fictionalized accounts that pass for history was strongly hinted at when Hardin, credited with some 30-40 murders, including the killing of numerous soldiers and law enforcement officers, was ultimately pardoned and released from prison, after which he promptly was admitted to the bar and magically transformed himself into a successful attorney. But here, alas, I have digressed. ([http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/HH/fha63\\_print.html](http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/HH/fha63_print.html) and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Wesley\\_Hardin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Wesley_Hardin))

Returning to The Handbook of Texas Online, we find that "most of the land [in Kenedy County] still remains in the hands of the Armstrong, King, Kenedy, and Yturria interests." Reading on, we find that these four families are closely interwoven through marriages and

business partnerships. The King Ranch was "founded in 1847 by Mifflin Kenedy and his partner Richard King, who acquired their vast holdings by both legal and questionable means. In the early 1880s, for example, Kenedy reportedly fenced in a lake that by tradition belonged to Doña Euliana Tijerina of the La Atravesada grant. To enforce their rule the Kings often called on the Texas Rangers, whom locals sometimes referred to as *los rinches de la Kineña* - the King Ranch Texas Rangers. Commenting on such practices, an anonymous newspaper article in 1878 averred that it was not unusual for King's neighbors 'to mysteriously disappear whilst his territory extends over entire counties.'" ([http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/KK/hck4\\_print.html](http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/KK/hck4_print.html))

So we see that the Kenedy and King families have been business partners for more than a century and a half. And so it is with the Yturria family as well: "Mexican-born Don Francisco Yturria founded the [Yturria] ranch and Brownsville's first private bank in the mid-Nineteenth Century. A Confederate war profiteer, Francisco Yturria formed a shipping company with several partners, including legendary King Ranch founder Richard King. The company monopolized the region's Civil War trade by registering ships in Yturria's name, sailing under Mexican flags and thereby moving through Union blockades." ([http://www.whitehouseforsale.org/ContributorsAndPaybacks/pioneer\\_profile.cfm?pioneer\\_ID=772](http://www.whitehouseforsale.org/ContributorsAndPaybacks/pioneer_profile.cfm?pioneer_ID=772))

In 1944, so as not to feel left out, Katharine Armstrong's uncle (Tobin's brother) "wed an heir of legendary King Ranch, linking two of the biggest ranches in Texas. The Armstrong Ranch has since gone global, with tracts in Australia and South America." ([http://www.whitehouseforsale.org/ContributorsAndPaybacks/pioneer\\_profile.cfm?pioneer\\_ID=509](http://www.whitehouseforsale.org/ContributorsAndPaybacks/pioneer_profile.cfm?pioneer_ID=509)) Thus we see that the four families that own Kenedy County are essentially just one big, happy family. And one extremely wealthy family. Among the "Armstrong, King, Kenedy, and Yturria interests" is oil; "between 1947 and January 1, 1991, a total of 31,800,494 barrels was produced" from wells in Kenedy County. At today's prices, that's roughly \$2 billion worth of oil. Not too shabby. ([http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/KK/hck4\\_print.html](http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/KK/hck4_print.html))

Some other interesting facts about this most unusual Texas county emerge on a website run by a guy who apparently has an obsession with visiting the highest point of land in each of Texas' 254 counties. Why? I have no idea, but here is a portion of his report on Kenedy County: "Kenedy County is one of those peculiar counties created at the behest of wealthy ranchers (in this case, the King Ranch) so that the county can be run as a sort of fiefdom. About 400 people live in the county, most of them in the little town of Sarita. Only one paved highway enters the county: US-77, which makes a straight shot north-south. Aside from the few roads in Sarita, the entire county is essentially company land, and access is not permitted anywhere without permission. The maps show virtually no realistic road network near the Kenedy highpoint from within Kenedy County ... One other interesting side note: Kenedy County is the only county out of the 254 in Texas not to have any secondary Farm to Market (FM) highways within its boundaries. Somewhere (I forget where) I read that there are only 7 miles of paved road in the entire county, not counting US-77." (<http://www.surgent.net/highpoints/tx/txattempts.html>)

And now, after that lengthy digression, it is time to return to where we left off with our story. In case you have forgotten, we were discussing the Sheriff Department's official report, as co-authored by Sheriff Ramon Salinas III and Chief Deputy Gilberto San Miguel, Jr.. And when we left off, Deputy San Miguel had just finished identifying for us the members of the alleged hunting party, whom he claims to have deposed, although no such written statements have



ever seen the light of day and probably don't actually exist.

There is little information of value in San Miguel's 2½-page "Incident Report." The first page contains an account of his arrival at the ranch, his greeting by Secret Service and Border Patrol agents, his meeting of Dick Cheney, and Cheney's one-paragraph account of the shooting, including the bizarre claim that "Mr. Whittington was standing on ground that was lower than the one he [Cheney] was standing on." (<http://www.caller2.com/2006/pdf/kcsr.pdf>)

On page two, San Miguel briefly describes the weapon Cheney was using. He then claims that he spoke briefly with Katharine Armstrong, "who told [him] pretty much the same story" as Cheney. San Miguel then parenthetically advises readers to "See her written statement for further details," which is, of course, rather difficult to do since no such statement is actually attached to the report.

San Miguel next describes his visit the following day with the hospitalized victim, Harry Whittington. The deputy claims, rather preposterously, that he "asked Mr. Whittington if we could record our conversation and Mr. Whittington requested not to be recorded due to his voice being raspy. It was then I requested a written affidavit be done and Mr. Whittington gladly agreed to do one as soon as he returned back to his office." There is, needless to say, no indication that such a statement has ever been taken.

According to San Miguel, "Whittington did speak of the incident and explained foremost that there was no alcohol during the hunt and everyone was wearing the proper hunting attire of blaze orange." Before Whittington could discuss how the shooting occurred, however, "a nurse came in the room and asked Lt. [Juan J.] Guzman and I to kind of hurry up so Mr. Whittington could rest. Mr Whittington again reiterated that this incident was just an accident." So Whittington apparently had enough energy to preemptively deny that there was any misconduct involved, but not enough to discuss what actually happened.

On the final page of the report, San Miguel gives a very brief description of his alleged visit to "the area were [sic] the incident occurred." The deputy reveals nothing of significance about the shooting site, offering only that he "was able to understand more how Mr. Cheney and Katharine Armstrong described the area in their statement." There was no need, of course, to take any photographs at the scene or attempt to gather any sort of evidence.

San Miguel ends his report with the claim that he had obtained, or planned to obtain, sworn statements from each of the named witnesses. But as we know, no such statements have ever been released, just as no sworn statements by the shooter and victim have ever been released, no Secret Service report has ever been released, no medical report on the victim's condition upon admission to the hospital has ever been released, and no evidence has ever been gathered and analyzed. There has been no mention by anyone, for example, of what became of Whittington's alleged hunting garb and other clothing, though such items would obviously contain evidence of the shot pattern and the amount of blood shed by the victim.

The report authored by San Miguel, and the supplemental report added by his boss, Salinas, are quite obviously tailored to accomplish several goals: absolve Dick Cheney of any responsibility for the shooting; deny that the Secret Service overstepped its authority by denying an investigating officer access to a potential crime scene; deny that the Sheriff's Department offered preferential treatment to the shooter; downplay the gravity of Whittington's wounds; and, finally, do all that while revealing as little as possible about the actual shooting.



There is little doubt that even if all the witnesses had been questioned, none of them would have deliberately contradicted the official account. In the vernacular of organized crime (which seems appropriate when dealing with members of the Bush Administration), these were all "made men." We know this because we know that only Cheney's most trusted friends and associates can get anywhere near him with a loaded weapon. So it seems a pretty safe bet that none of the alleged witnesses would openly contradict the tall tale told by Cheney and Armstrong. However, the official story is so sketchily defined, and so fundamentally absurd, that it is a given that if it were to be told in sworn statements by multiple parties, those witness accounts would contain numerous obfuscations and unintentional contradictions.

Unfortunately, we don't have access to those statements, which in all likelihood don't even exist. But from what little evidence is available, we can safely conclude that the official story of the shooting incident is yet another web of transparent lies being sold to the American people. Harry Whittington was not shot from 30 yards away and he almost certainly wasn't shagging a downed bird, and Dick Cheney wasn't likely shooting at a bird. Considering that Whittington was shot at fairly close range, and that the shot was apparently centered approximately on his right collarbone, it is inconceivable that Cheney could have thought he was firing at a quail at the time he pulled the trigger.

And yet, strangely enough, it seems safe to assume that Dick Cheney did not intend to shoot Harry Whittington. We know this because if he had intentionally shot Whittington in the face and chest from close range, it is a foregone conclusion that Harry would have never made it to the hospital alive. You just don't normally shoot someone with the intent to kill and then shuttle them off to the hospital to recover and tell their tale. It's considered bad form among criminals of the caliber of Dick Cheney.

So what really did happen at the Armstrong Ranch that day? How are we to explain a shooting that is difficult to interpret as being accidental, and yet doesn't appear to have been intentional, and that has been presented to the American people through a tapestry of obvious lies?

The most prevalent theory that briefly circulated in alternative media circles adds the consumption of alcohol to the equation. And to be sure, there are clear indications that the boys were doing some drinking that day. As with all other aspects of this story, the alcohol question has elicited contradictory answers from the 'witnesses.' Armstrong first claimed that there was no alcohol involved, "zero, zippo," and then later allowed that maybe some members of the party were drinking, but that the drinkers weren't doing the shooting. Cheney was initially said to have not been drinking at all, but he later acknowledged knocking back a beer at lunch, which of course contradicted both of Armstrong's versions of events. References to alcohol consumption mysteriously went missing from posted media reports and interview transcripts. Both the Parks and Wildlife Report and the Sheriff's Department Report proclaim Cheney to have been alcohol free, but he was not even questioned for more than twelve hours after the incident, so he was obviously never tested for drug or alcohol consumption, or even observed for signs of intoxication. And doctors, as previously noted, have refused to release the results of Whittington's blood-alcohol tests.

So was alcohol involved? There is little doubt that it was, possibly along with other intoxicants as well. And it is tempting to conjure up the mental image of a hopelessly drunk Dick Cheney recklessly swinging his shotgun around and blasting poor Harry Whittington in the face ... and then possibly slurring out orders for someone to clean up his mess while he

stumbled off in search of more phantom prey. Alternately, some have suggested that Cheney didn't actually shoot Whittington at all, but rather drunkenly dropped his gun, causing it to accidentally discharge.

Both of those are possibilities, I suppose, but I suspect that something darker and more sinister lies beneath this hastily assembled cover-up. If Cheney were inclined to get so drunk on hunting excursions that he could accidentally shoot a partner in the face and chest from close range, then you would think that he might have a bit of trouble finding hunting partners -- as well as guides, hosts, security personnel, and medical attendants. And if he had dropped the gun and it accidentally discharged, wouldn't it have been much easier to just go with that story, rather than cooking up an obviously fraudulent one? Would dropping the gun have cast Cheney in a worse light than spinning around and shooting someone in the face? After all, you don't have to be drunk to drop a gun -- just careless, which is certainly no worse than being reckless.

The fact that "Cheney was drunk" theories got a considerable amount of play on obviously fraudulent 'progressive' websites (Arianna Huffington's blog being a prime example) tends to indicate, to skeptics such as myself, that the alcohol angle is a classic case of a "limited hang-out." (I've probably explained this before, but as a courtesy to new readers, I'll do so once again: within the intelligence community, a "limited hang-out" is a damage-control tactic that basically involves pleading guilty to jaywalking in the hopes that the judge won't notice that you are also a mass murderer.)

So again we must ask: what really happened at the Armstrong Ranch that day? Perhaps what we need to do here in order to answer that question is think 'outside the box.' Perhaps we need to look beyond those aspects of the official story that have been universally accepted as true. Perhaps we need to question the basic premise that this shooting occurred while some gentleman hunters were out on a quail hunting expedition.

I have never quite believed that Dick Cheney has any real interest in hunting quail (and I have an even harder time picturing Karl Rove out on a quail hunt, though he is also said to hunt at the Armstrong Ranch). And though no one seems to have noticed, the official cover story spun by Cheney and Rove tends to strongly indicate that neither of the two knows the first thing about quail hunting. In fact, it would appear that I have learned more about the sport of quail hunting by spending a couple of afternoons on the Internet than Cheney has learned by allegedly spending a lifetime out in the brush.

Let's be honest here: Dick Cheney is a good-ole-boy quail hunter from Wisconsin in the same way that George W. Bush is a good-ole-boy Texas rancher. Like Bush, Richard Cheney was *born* a blue-blood elite. The media-crafted public persona has no basis in reality; it exists only in the collective mind.

Consider that Cheney and Rove had almost an entire day to craft some sort of credible cover story for the shooting. And they were free to invent virtually any scenario they saw fit to invent, since all the witnesses were going to go along with the charade, and the fully-owned Keystone Cops of Kenedy County were ready to close the case before Whittington had even hit the ground. And yet the Seasoned Hunter, working hand-in-hand with The Great Spinmeister, concocted what has to be about the lamest possible story they could have come up with. And incredibly enough, the pair actually thought that the fable they had constructed completely exonerated Cheney!

In fact, it is safe to say that portraying Cheney as blameless was the primary concern of our two script writers. And yet the story they produced, after mulling it over for quite some time, failed miserably in achieving that goal. The most likely reason for that failure is that the dynamic duo have virtually no knowledge of safe, time-honored hunting practices.

But if the party wasn't out on a quail hunt, then what were they doing that day, and how did Whittington end up with a chest full of birdshot? The best we can do is take an educated guess based on the following, which are the most reasonable conclusions that can be drawn from the available evidence.

- Harry Whittington was not shagging a downed bird when he was shot, and he probably wasn't wearing hunting gear.
- Cheney almost certainly wasn't shooting at a bird when he blasted Whittington.
- Whittington was hit in the kill zone from relatively short range with a stationary (point and shoot) shot fired from Cheney's gun, which strongly suggests that the shot was fired intentionally.
- Nevertheless, Harry Whittington was likely not the intended target.
- The incident took place in Kenedy County -- a sprawling, 1,500-square-mile patch of land in South Texas that is fully owned and controlled by a network of wealthy families, and that is - with the exception of a few public roads - completely inaccessible to the general public, and that is, by all appearances, beyond the reach of any law enforcement agencies.
- The Armstrong Ranch, and Kenedy County in general, would be the ideal place for a sociopath like Dick Cheney to indulge in his most depraved fantasies.
- Dick Cheney could not possibly have mistaken Harry Whittington for a bird.
- Cheney could, however, have easily mistaken Whittington for another person.

The scenario that best fits these facts, although it is an entirely speculative one, is that Dick Cheney shot Harry Whittington accidentally when he thought he was taking aim at someone else. As Whittington would have had to be directly involved in the activities being pursued, it was obviously in his best interests to go along with the Cheney/Rove story and discourage anyone from looking too closely at the facts of the case.

And that, my friends, is my best guess as to what occurred on the Armstrong Ranch at approximately 5:30 PM on February 11, 2006. Not that it matters, of course. As Time Magazine opined, "What took place in the hours before and after the shooting is a largely mundane tale that became extraordinary" only because Cheney, for several days, "seemed unwilling to tell it." Of course, there is, as Time acknowledged, "a small and geeky but persistent debate over whether Cheney might have been closer to Whittington than 30 yds., the figure in the sheriff's report." Luckily though, 'real' reporters don't engage in "geeky" debates, so the American people have been spared from exposure to such trivialities. (John Cloud "Inside the Shooting at the Ranch," Time Magazine, February 27, 2006)

After the passing of just a few short weeks, the shooting incident has become little more than an obscure historical footnote. It may provide fodder for an occasional late night joke, but it hardly merits any serious discussion. There is, however, one final observation that can be made here: if Cheney was destined to have such a hunting 'accident,' he could at least have had the decency to let it happen a couple of years ago, when he was out on an alleged duck hunt with a certain Supreme Court justice. Quack, quack.

# the Center for an Informed

## **NEWSLETTER #85**

*August 29, 2006*

### *Alien Nation Edition*

<http://www.davesweb.cncost.com/nwsltr85.html>

So it appears as though the word "burglary," though commonly understood to mean a break-in for the purpose of committing a theft, is actually defined as a break-in for the purpose of engaging in *any* criminal activity, so the incident at Ruppert's *FTB* offices does qualify, from a legal perspective, as a burglary. My bad. Sorry about that.

Also, before moving on to other things, I have to note here that several people wrote me to ask, confidentially, who the mystery dissident journalist was. \*Sigh\* I'm going to give you all the benefit of the doubt here and just assume that these were probably new readers who can, I suppose, be forgiven for failing to appreciate my rather demented sense of humor.

Now then, by a quick show of hands, how many of you read the title of this newsletter and got all excited thinking that I was going to be writing about alien abductions, shape-shifting reptilians and anal probes? I see a few hands up in the back of the room, which means that some of you are probably going to be disappointed. But that's okay, because there is always a certain percentage of you that are disappointed with anything that I choose to write about.

I was shocked to find, for example, that some of you were not the least bit interested in reading about Dick Cheney's penis. One of you actually wrote to tell me that not only is the subject of little interest, but that, in any event, Cheney's penis "couldn't possibly be any bigger than my husband's." Information sharing can be a good thing, to be sure, but for future reference, that was probably a little more information than I really needed.

Moving on then, I know that I have beat this particular horse before, on more than one occasion, but bear with me here because I feel that I need to point out once again, for the benefit of the slow learners in the crowd, that the basic principle by which this country's political establishment operates is - now pay attention! - *control through fear*.

Everyone understands that ... right?

I mean, it's pretty basic stuff – scare the hell out of people and they'll obediently follow whatever path they are told is the safe path to follow. Of course, it probably won't really be the safe path to follow, and there probably won't really be anything to fear – other than the motives and intentions of those directing you down the path. But if you really scare the bejesus out of somebody, none of that is going to matter to them at the time.

There is, to be sure, a whole lot of stuff to be scared of in the world today – or at least a whole lot of stuff that we are conditioned to fear: terrorists; immigrants; emerging viruses; natural disasters; violent criminals; Peak Oil; Iran; Iraq; North Korea; Osama bin Laden; Saddam Hussein; Hezbollah; water bottles on airplanes. All in all, it's a very scary world out there.

I was reminded of this recently when I was called upon, for the first time in my life, to serve jury duty. Actually, that's not quite true; I have been called upon before, but I was never able to serve because of, if I remember correctly, financial hardships and medical conditions. But this recent jury notice happened to find me in good health and financially sound – which is another way of saying that getting out of jury service has become much more difficult – so I diligently reported for duty, showing due respect for the sanctity of the courthouse by arriving only slightly late and with my “Fuck the LAPD” t-shirt only partly exposed, and then proceeded to sit idly by for several hours with little to do other than mentally calculate the odds that any prosecutor would actually seat me on any jury.

Midway through a very long day, I was sent to a courtroom along with about forty other potential jurors. Before entering the courtroom, a random draw was held and I happened to pick a fairly high number, so my fate, it appeared, would be determined by how many of the hapless souls ahead of me in line were accepted as jurors. It soon became clear that more than a few of them were going to make a play for rejection, so I figured that, if nothing else, I might sneak in as an alternate juror.

There seemed to be two different strategies employed by those seeking dismissal, by the way, one that we will call the “good strategy” and one that we will call the “really bad strategy.” The opposing attorneys, you see, are basically on a fishing expedition during the jury selection process, and what they are fishing for is bias. The defense attorney is basically looking for bias against his or her client, and the prosecutor is looking for bias against pretty much any form of authority. Toward that end, each side will ask a series of questions. It's pretty obvious what they are fishing for, which makes it pretty easy to make a play for dismissal.

The really bad strategy, employed by more than one potential juror that day, is to reflexively snap at every piece of bait that is dangled out there, even if doing so requires you to directly contradict a position that you took just a couple of questions ago. This strategy will likely provide some invaluable entertainment, but revealing to everyone in the room that you will go to hilarious lengths to avoid jury service will not necessarily get you booted.

The better strategy, by far, is to zero in on a single area of bias that the attorneys are looking for and then sell it as best you can. To greatly increase your odds of success, I would suggest playing to the prosecutor rather than the defense attorney, who is likely a public defender with little interest in actually defending his or her client. From what I observed, an anti-police bias will get you kicked loose in time for lunch, but a pro-police bias probably will not. Compare these two examples (which may or may not be exaggerated to some extent):

Prosecutor: Have you ever had any personal encounters with the police, and, if so, would you describe those encounters as positive or negative experiences?

Potential Juror #1: Well, I was pulled over once a long time ago by a cop who seemed like he might have had a little bit of an attitude, but overall ...

Prosecutor: Judge, I move that this juror be dismissed and then immediately taken to lock-up.

Public Defender: Have you ever had any personal encounters with the police, and, if so, would you describe those encounters as positive or negative experiences?

Potential Juror #2: Well, my brother is a cop, and my brother-in-law is with the highway patrol, and my dad is retired FBI, and my wife works part-time down at the station as a dispatcher, and I know from talking to all of them that the police have a really hard job, what with having to deal with all the scumbags out there, and with the ACLU-types crying every time one of the scumbags goes and gets himself shot. Speaking of shooting, by the way, did I mention that I've been the president of my local NRA chapter for the last ten years? And Grand Dragon of my KKK chapter? By the way, is that nigger over there the defendant in this case? 'Cuz I'll tell you what, that sumbitch looks guilty as all hell to me.

Public Defender: Your Honor, I think we may have found our jury foreman.

As a potential juror, you are not told what charges the defendant is facing. But if you pay attention to the questions that are asked, it's not that hard to figure out. In this case, a young boy, likely the son of the defendant, was apparently seriously injured or even killed while riding a small dirt bike. The boy was too young to ride legally, and so the state was charging the man with something along the lines of reckless child endangerment.

For the record, some of the potential jurors seemed horrified at the thought of a child possibly maimed or killed as a result of the negligence of an adult. Others seemed just as horrified that the state was prosecuting a grieving father who had likely already punished himself far more than the state ever could. Or maybe that was just me.

All of the prospective jurors were asked whether they had ever let their own children do something that was potentially dangerous, or whether they themselves had been allowed, as children, to do things that others would consider dangerous – possibly even reckless. A few of the jurors allowed that they had ridden dirt bikes and/or that they had allowed their own kids to ride dirt bikes or ATVs. None of the jurors' answers ventured much beyond that. My number, alas, never came up, and that's kind of a shame, because I sat there for several hours with nothing better to do than mentally compose my answer to that particular question. It would have gone something like this:

Was I ever allowed to do anything dangerous as a child?! Is that what you're asking me? *Are you serious?!* EVERYTHING I did as a child was dangerous. EVERYTHING!! If I allowed my own kids to do half of what I was allowed to do as a kid, the Department of Child Services would have taken them away from me years ago and I'd probably be locked away in prison. Negligence?! *You want to talk about negligence?* My parents must take the friggin' cake when it comes to negligence! As just one example, our family logged thousands of miles driving all over Hell's half-acre in the family car and never once - not once! - did they strap me into a child safety seat. Come to think of it, most of the time I didn't even wear a seatbelt. Here's another example: for most of my formative years, my primary mode of transportation was a bicycle, and *never once did my parents insist that I wear a helmet! I didn't even own one* (which is probably a good thing, because I'm thinking that if I had tooled around town on my bike sporting a helmet in the 1960s and 1970s, I would have gotten my ass kicked on a pretty regular basis). And get this: every year, on the Fourth of July, I was allowed to set off explosive devices and burn shit up right in front of our house! And my parents, if you can believe this, watched me do it *and even cheered me on!* And on Halloween, I was allowed to go out at night *with no adult supervision* to solicit candy from complete fucking strangers. Oops ... sorry there, judge ... am I allowed to say 'fucking' in this courtroom? Anyway, as I was saying, I was also allowed to ride a small dirt bike, or at least I would have been if my dumbass older brother hadn't crashed the damn thing into a chain-link fence before I got my chance to ride, deeply cutting his finger in the process. *Oh shit!* Maybe I shouldn't have mentioned that, since the prosecutor over there seems a little overzealous. Is there a statute of limitations on this child endangerment stuff? I mean, you're not going to extradite my dad from Arizona to answer for letting my brother ride that dirt bike back in 1970, are you? Anyway, like I was saying, when I was a kid I was actually allowed – forced, really – to *walk* to school, which is shameful, when you think about it, since everybody knows that any reasonably responsible parent lines up with all the other SUV-driving parents to drop off and pick up their kids, so that the little ones can be safely transported to their respective homes where they can interact with their peers in safe, modern ways such as with text messaging and instant messaging, rather than in the dangerous ways of the past, which generally involved leaving the house to play in the great outdoors. Believe it or not, we were allowed to do that. We were allowed to freely roam the neighborhood from a very young age, sometimes on bikes, sometimes on skateboards (with hard clay wheels that would stop cold if there happened to be a microscopic particle of sand on the sidewalk, hence the scar on my chin), and sometimes on foot. And do you know why we were allowed to freely roam the neighborhood? *Because we actually HAD a neighborhood!* Believe it or not, there was a real

sense of neighborhood and community in those days of yore. I don't live in a neighborhood today, your honor. Oh sure, I have 'neighbors,' I suppose, in the sense that there are other people who live all around me. But none of them know one another. We all live in our own little safehouses, shielded from the scary world. But in the old days, everyone knew each other and everyone's kids ran the streets together. And the school, well, that was the center of it all. There was always something to do at the school. There were bike safety classes and an annual bike rodeo. There was the wildly popular annual fair. There were various after-school programs. There were bake sales. There were paper drives. There was a very active PTA. There were people staffing the school on weekends who would gladly provide you with a carom table, or a basketball, or a football, or all the gear needed to put together a baseball game. And finding enough people to field a team was never a problem. But if you go by a school now on the weekend, or even fifteen minutes after the final bell rings on any given weekday, do you know what you'll find? Padlocked fences and barren asphalt. You won't see any kids playing. And you won't see any kids on the streets either. Where the hell are all the kids? And what happened, by the way, to the paperboys? When I was a kid, we were all paperboys. We were out riding the streets after school delivering the evening newspaper, and then once a month going up to the doors of the homes of random strangers, demanding money for providing a service, and being careful to always 'porch' the paper during the month of December in the hopes of collecting those big Christmas tips, and then returning to the usual erratic delivery pattern in January, while forever hoping that the one guy who never answers the door when you come to collect even when you can see him through the window sitting there watching TV and drinking a beer will eventually pay you for the last three months of service, so that maybe there will be some kind of financial reward for getting up every Sunday morning before dawn and overloading the handlebars of your bike with heavy Sunday editions of the local newspaper so that you can pedal around town alone and cold in the pre-dawn hours, because your parents – and I bet you were wondering where I was going with this, weren't you? – have no concern for the way they recklessly endanger your life on pretty much a daily basis. Can you imagine allowing a child to ride a bike with dangerously overloaded handlebars, with no helmet or other safety gear, alone and a couple miles from home at 5:00 in the morning in a neighborhood full of strangers, possibly sex offenders? But you know what, Judge? We kind of liked doing it, most of the time. And you know what else? While my kids have every goddamn electronic gadget imaginable – from I-Pods to cell phones to laptop computers to portable DVD players – they don't have what I had as a kid. They don't have it because it has been stolen from them and it can't be replaced with e-mail and digital cameras. What they don't have, your honor, is a sense of neighborhood. They don't have a sense of community. They have been deprived of meaningful human interaction. They have been conditioned to live in a world where trust in others has been replaced by fear of everyone and everything. Their world is a world built entirely on fear. But here I may have digressed a bit. What the hell was the question again?

As I have stressed before on these pages, one of the primary goals of the powers-that-be is the complete atomization of society – the destruction of all social, cultural, and familial bonds. It is the ultimate divide-and-conquer strategy: reduce the entire population to armies of one, each alone and isolated, unable to fight back against the rapidly encroaching police state. As I have also emphasized before, technology has played a major role in the process of atomizing Western society. Just as the egregiously misrepresented Luddites warned, the proliferation of advanced technology has led to a rapid process of depersonalization.



But just how successful have the puppet-masters been at fostering social isolation? I am sorry to have to report here that a landmark new study (all but ignored by the American media) provides chilling evidence that the psychological warfare campaign has been wildly successful. According to a Washington Post report:

Americans are far more socially isolated today than they were two decades ago, and a sharply growing number of people say they have no one in whom they can confide, according to a comprehensive new evaluation of the decline of social ties in the United States.

A quarter of Americans say they have no one with whom they can discuss personal troubles, more than double the number who were similarly isolated in 1985. Overall, the number of people Americans have in their closest circle of confidants has dropped from around three to about two.

The comprehensive new study paints a sobering picture of an increasingly fragmented America, where intimate social ties – once seen as an integral part of daily life and associated with a host of psychological and civic benefits – are shrinking or nonexistent. In bad times, far more people appear to suffer alone ...

Compared with 1985, nearly 50 percent more people in 2004 reported that their spouse is the only person they can confide in ... Whereas nearly three-quarters of people in 1985 reported they had a friend in whom they could confide, only half in 2004 said they could count on such support. The number of people who said they counted a neighbor as a confidant dropped by more than half, from about 19 percent to about 8 percent.

(Shankar Vedantam "Social Isolation Growing in U.S., Study Says," Washington Post, June 23, 2006;

read the full report here: <http://www.asanet.org/galleries/default-file/June06ASRFeature.pdf#search=%22Lynn%20Smith-Lovin%20%26%20social%20isolation%22>)

The study found sharp declines in all non-kin relationships. In 1985, 29.4 percent of people reported a close relationship with at least one co-worker; by 2004, that figure had dropped to 18 percent. Even more alarmingly, the percentage of respondents enjoying a close relationship with a co-member of a group dropped from 26.1 all the way down to 11.8. Understating the obvious was the study's lead author, Duke University Professor Lynn Smith-Lovin: "This is a big social change, and it indicates something that's not good for our society."

Let's be a bit more blunt here and stipulate that a society in which 24.6 percent of the people *do not have a single close confidant*, and an astounding 53.4 percent have *no* close non-kin relationships, is a very, very sick society. It is debatable, in fact, whether it is actually a society at all, but rather an essentially random collection of strangers, unconnected to each other in any meaningful way, each going about their meaningless lives in conditioned isolation.

Just how sick is this society? That is difficult to say, since we don't have any data from a healthy society to provide a baseline for comparison. It is regrettable, to say the least, that the data available to the researchers only covered changes in America over the last two decades. Lacking earlier data, 1985 serves as a baseline for evaluating the data from 2004, but there is little doubt that America was already a very sick society by the mid-1980s and that social isolation had already increased immensely from earlier decades.

What would we find if we had data dating back to the 1960s, or the 1940s, or the 1920s? Does anyone doubt that that data would reveal a marked pattern of steadily increasing social isolation extending back many decades? When was America last a healthy society? What do the social isolation statistics of a healthy society look like? If someone were to finance a comprehensive *international* study of social isolation, how sick would the figures from 2004 America look in relation to the figures from the rest of the world? Where would America rank among nations? I'm guessing we'd be dead last.

And what does the future hold? If the last twenty years have brought such significant change, through a process that appears to be accelerating, then what will we find twenty years from now, or even ten years from now? If one in every four Americans now have no close relationships, even within their own family, can we expect to see that rise to one in every two Americans by 2020? Is this the kind of society you want your kids to grow up in? Because this isn't conjecture or 'conspiracy theorizing,' folks, this is the cold, hard reality of the society we live in. Take a look around as you go about your daily activities today; one of every four people you see have no one to turn to, no one to confide in, no one to really talk to. And fully half the people you see have no social network at all beyond their own family.

But fear not. A lot of them probably have I-pods and personal computers with high-speed internet access. So it's all good, I suppose.

Technology has, to be sure, played a major role in the rise of social isolation. But so too has the selling of fear, for we live in a world, as I may have mentioned before, where control through fear is the basic operating principle of our allegedly democratic government. I am not suggesting here, of course, that this is something new. There was, if I recall correctly, a fair amount of fear-mongering going on when I was a kid. Everyone seemed to be convinced, for example, that it was only a matter of time before "The Bomb" came raining down on America's cities. To insure that we never stopped thinking about the prospect of nuclear annihilation, public schools held regular "bomb drills" or "drop drills." When the alarm

sounded at my school, we were all expected to take cover under our desks, with our hands strategically placed over our heads. We held regular fire alarm drills as well, but those were a bit different in that they had a real purpose: acquainting students and staff with evacuation plans in the event that an actual emergency should arise. The drop drills, on the other hand, served no purpose other than to induce fear. And I say that because research that I have done as an adult has led me to the shocking conclusion that my hands and a wooden desk would not have offered ideal protection from a nuclear blast.

There were other things to fear in the '60s and '70s as well. Strangers bearing candy were a persistent problem, though I made it through my childhood without ever encountering one of these legendary figures – except on Halloween, when, for some unexplained reason, it was perfectly okay to accept candy from strangers, especially if they were strangers who passed out really good candy and not the shitty candy that some people handed out, almost as if they actually wanted someone to egg their house. And then, of course, there were the people who just left a bucket of candy on the front porch for trick-or-treaters to help themselves to, kind of on the honor system.

While we're on that subject, I'd like to take this opportunity to say, to all the kids down in Torrance, California who got to those houses after my brothers and I did, that we are very sorry for our youthful indiscretions and we plan on making it up to you someday. Also, we would like all our former neighbors to know that we no longer see the humor in setting off smoke bombs from the local fireworks stand on your front porches and then ringing-and-running your house. At the time, I'll admit, it seemed really damn funny, especially when you'd come stomping out through the cloud of colored smoke to try to find us, while we sat hiding in the bushes across the street struggling mightily to stifle our laughter. But now, looking back as a responsible adult, I find it only mildly amusing.

Anyway, let's now move on and take a look at the question that I am sure is on everyone's mind, which is: what the hell is your point here, Dave? Glad you asked. The point is that we are now in a better position to discuss the question posed in Newsletter #81 (April 7, 2006). As readers will no doubt recall, in that outing I basically asked what it was going to take to get a reaction from the American people. But as it turns out, I was asking the wrong question.

The problem, you see, is not that the American people are not waking up to the outrages committed by this administration. To the extent that they can be trusted, every public opinion poll in recent years - whether concerning the occupation of Iraq, the handling of Hurricane Katrina, the performance of the 9-11 Commission, or any number of other issues – has reflected the fact that the American people are indeed waking up. And among those who have woken up, there appears to be agreement that the problems we are facing require immediate action.

So the problem is not that the American people don't know what's going on. And it's not that they are too apathetic to care about fixing the problems once they recognize what those

problems are. No, the real problem is that what is required to correct the course of this ship-of-state is a massive and sustained social movement. And the real question that needs to be asked is: *how does a massive social movement arise in a nation that is almost completely devoid of any meaningful social networks?*

And the answer, it appears, is: it doesn't.

We are all products of what is surely the most socially isolated society that this planet has ever seen (except for those of you who are reading this in other parts of the world). And the harsh reality of the sick society that we live in is that the obtaining of real knowledge may be more of a curse than a blessing. With real knowledge comes the ability to see more clearly through the fog of lies, but with that increased awareness comes an inevitable feeling of helplessness. For how is someone to act upon that which has been learned when said person has no social networks to call upon and acting alone is clearly not going to prove effective? Hence the gaining of knowledge often leads, ironically enough, to yet further social isolation.

If I had it to do over again, I don't know that I would have burrowed down this rabbit hole as deeply as I have. Unfortunately, it's a one-way path; once you have dug your way in, there's no way back out. There's no way to unlearn that which has been learned. There is a certain satisfaction that comes with being able to understand how the world really works, and being able to more accurately process new information as it becomes available. But if you are powerless to right the wrongs in the world, is it better not to know? Is it better to live life comfortably numb?

I often get messages from some of you asking why I don't burrow deeper – why I don't address issues like, for instance, those mentioned at the top of this post. And the answer is that I don't find the evidence in support of these ideas very credible. Or maybe it's just that I haven't dug deep enough down all the various branches of the rabbit hole. Maybe the view from my current position is so unrelentingly bleak that I don't want to find out what lies beneath.

But then again, maybe if you dig deep enough, there is another way out.